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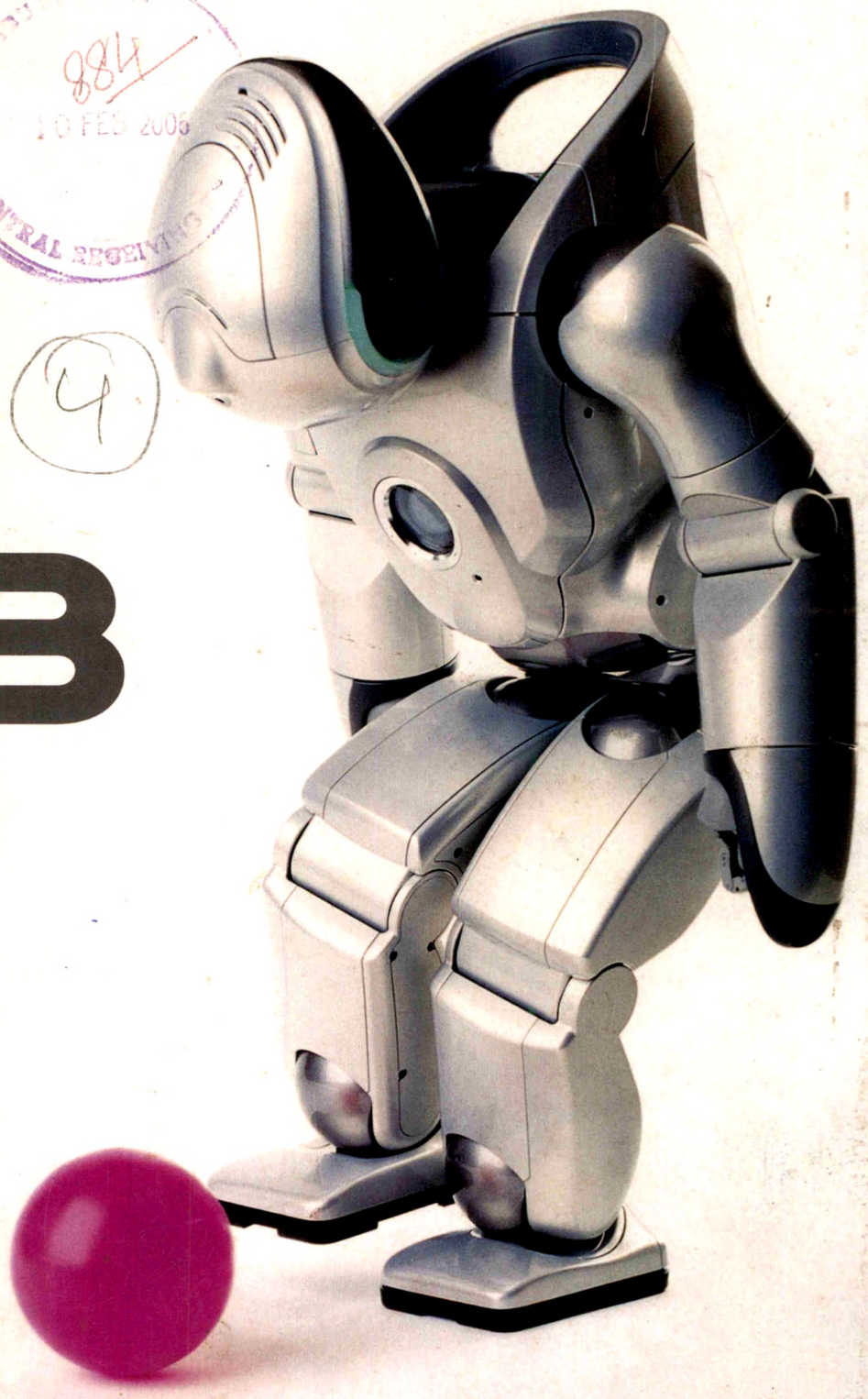
THE RISE OF ROBOTS



AN OVERVIEW OF JAPANESE ROBOTICS

MAGIC OF THE

Marketplace

"Roll up, roll up. Fresh tuna at bargain prices! You can't afford to miss it!" A stroll along the narrow street known as Ameyoko is a real Tokyo experience for all the five senses. Stretching from Ueno to Okachimachi, this 500-meter long passageway houses over 400 shops all packed tightly together. Brightly colored fresh fish, fruit, cakes and sweets delight the eye, while spicy aromas fill the air. Come and lose yourself in the chaotic sights, sounds and smells of Ameyoko.

ACCESS Ueno Station, the gateway to Taito, is 60 minutes from Narita Airport by express on the Keisei Line. • Asakusa is five minutes from Ueno on the subway Ginza Line.

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QRIO APPROACHES A BALL PERCEIVED WITH HIS OWN "EYES." PHOTO: TADASHI OKOCHI

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A PASSION FOR fashion

Along with such industries as film and animation, the Japanese government is focusing on fashion as a way of globally promoting Japanese brands. One of its key initiatives kicked off in Tokyo last fall.

The show staged by the hit Tokyo unit "mintdesigns" featured a range of exciting designs.

Whether you are a 10-year-old girl or a 55-year-old businessman, chances are there is a Japanese fashion magazine targeted at you. With a fashion market worth 13 trillion yen a year, Japan now ranks among the world's most fashion-conscious countries. Top designers from around the globe flock to the back alleys of Tokyo's Harajuku district seeking inspiration from the latest offerings from street fashion brands popular with the young. When it comes to disseminating new fashions, Tokyo is an exciting place to be.

The city hosted a major fashion festival, Japan Fashion Week (JFW) in Tokyo, last autumn. Devised with the aim of promoting Japanese fashions overseas, JFW is a joint public-private initiative run by various government agencies working in partnership with the textile and fashion industries. Marquees were set up in the outer gardens of Meiji Jingu shrine, the main venue, to showcase designers' Tokyo collections and provide a venue for displays by Japanese textile makers, giving visitors a comprehensive overview of the Japan fashion scene.

Shigeki Okada, chair of the Council of Fashion Designers, Tokyo, and one of the originators of JFW, explains, "Streets in areas like Harajuku are buzzing, but if you look at the wider picture you see that we have problems attracting overseas journalists and buyers due to

DRESS CAMP was one of the hot brands presenting shows in the specially erected marquees. The talents of designer Toshikazu Iwaya, just 30 years of age, set the collective pulse of the audience racing.

Media and fashion industry representatives rub shoulders outside the marquees.

PHOTOS: KEIZO OHKUBO

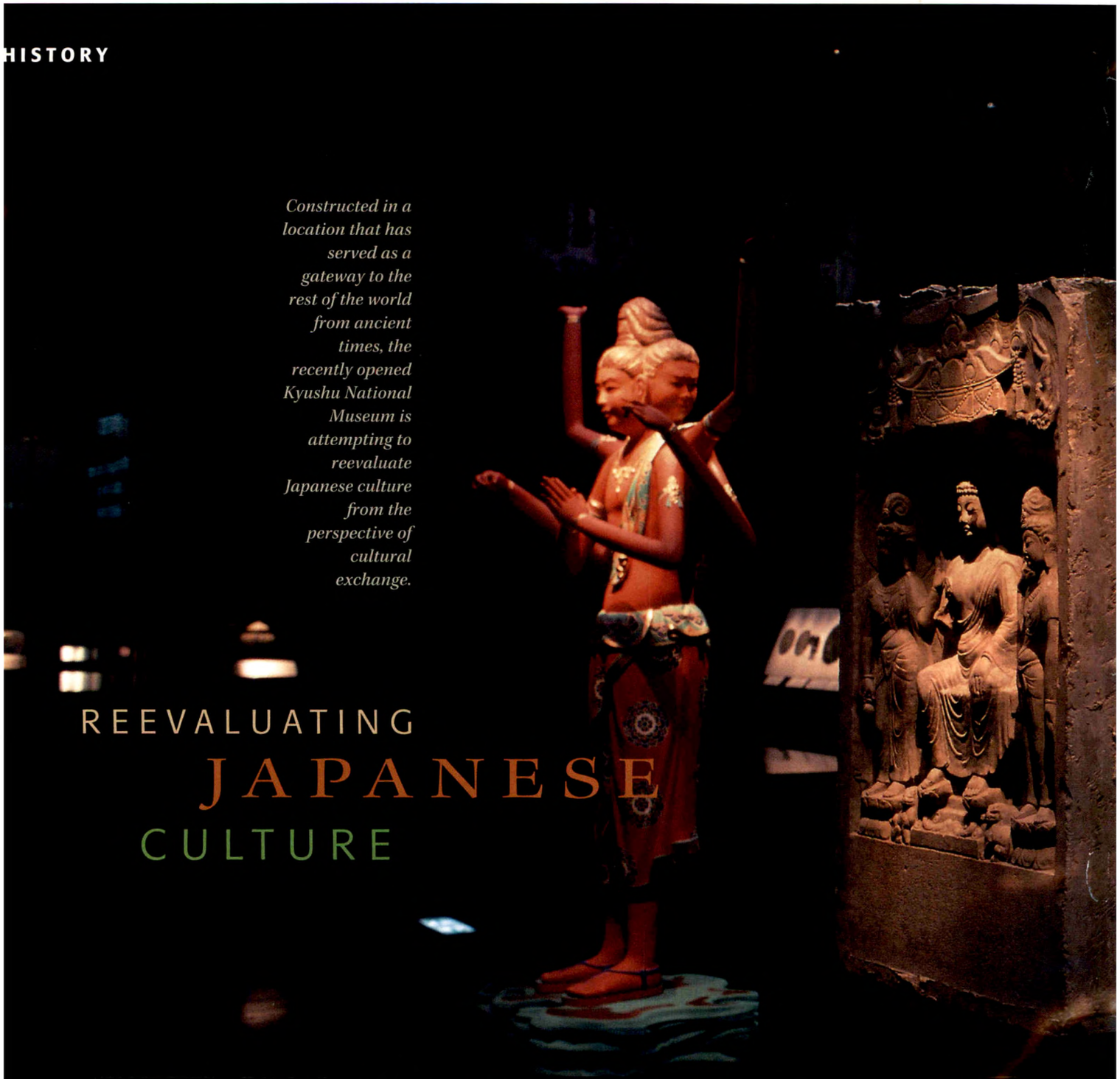
brands holding their shows for up to 40 days. We also have the problem of capable designers heading overseas in search of greater opportunities. Moreover our textile and apparel industries, while boasting a very high level of technical expertise, are facing tough times under pressure from imported products. The public and private sectors both recognized the pressing need do something about this situation, so we joined forces to launch JFW as a means of promoting Japanese fashion overseas and expanding business opportunities."

This season's Tokyo collections featured a lineup of young designers who are attracting international attention and included shows by talented designers working on Paris collections. Another notable feature was the participation of designers active in Hong Kong and Korea.

"I'd like to make Tokyo an incubator for up-and-coming Japanese designers, and for young practitioners from around the world," enthuses Okada. "It has a slightly different feel from Paris or Milan, and I'd like to see it producing collections that are edgy yet still youthful."

In 1985 top Japanese designers such as Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo launched their Tokyo collections in an effort to make Tokyo a world center of fashion after Paris and Milan. Twenty years on, Tokyo is still redesigning itself as a fashion center.

— MAYUMI NAKAMURA



Constructed in a location that has served as a gateway to the rest of the world from ancient times, the recently opened Kyushu National Museum is attempting to reevaluate Japanese culture from the perspective of cultural exchange.

REEVALUATING JAPANESE CULTURE

Some people say that Japanese culture is unique in that it has been cultivated without any outside influence at all due to its geographic position of being separated from the Asian mainland by an expanse of sea. Others suggest that Japanese culture is nothing more than an imitation of the culturally advanced regions of China, the Korean peninsula or the West during their respective periods of historical prominence. Uniqueness and imitation are terms often used when discussing Japanese culture. But which interpretation is correct?

The Kyushu National Museum opened in the city of Dazaifu in Fukuoka Prefecture in October 2005, and seeks to provide an answer to this very question.

Vice Curator, Shinichi Miyajima, explains the museum's underlying philosophy of reassessing the formulation of Japanese culture from the point of view of Asian history, "Kyushu's location in the west of the Japanese archipelago, close to the southern extreme of the Korean peninsula, has seen it play an important role as a gateway for foreign culture. From ancient times right through to the modern age, Kyushu has acted as a conduit for the import of Chinese and Korean culture, and in the Age of Discovery, for the cultures of such seafaring Western nations as Spain and Holland. Recognizing this historical background, the museum aims to take a fresh look at Japanese culture from the viewpoint of the vital role that cultural exchange with the outside world has played in its formulation."

Close inspection of the motifs on the bronze mirrors exhibited in the museum reveals a striking similarity among those unearthed in China, the Korean peninsula and Japan—undeniable evidence of the intensity of the human and cultural ex-

At right is a Gandharan Buddhist figure of the 2–3 century AD from present day Pakistan. At center is a Tang Relief Buddha triad figure brought to Japan in the 8th century from China. At left stands a precise replica of the Nara period Kokufuji-Temple Ashura figure created in AD 734.

PHOTO: TOMOHIRO MUDA

changes that occurred between China, Korea and Japan in ancient times.

The museum also houses exhibits of Buddhist statues from Japan and other Asian countries, and comparisons show the obvious influence on Japanese Buddhist art of the Gandhara culture which flourished in present day northern India and Pakistan, and was transmitted along the ancient Silk Road.

It is also fascinating to note from exhibits that pottery imported from China and southern Vietnam played an important role in the establishment of Japanese aesthetics, as manifested by Japan's tea culture, seen by overseas observers and by Japanese people themselves as the very essence of Japanese aesthetics.

Associate Curator, Rui Ichimoto, explains, "Comparison with Asia makes it easier to understand that Japanese culture is similar but different from the cultures of its Asian neighbors. It has developed its own original culture by accepting and adapting aspects of the advanced cultures around it."

The city where the museum is located, Dazaifu, was named after the government headquarters established there in the 7th century to administer diplomatic and trade relations with China and the Korean peninsula. The Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine stands as a reminder of the halcyon days of that era, and as one of the main tourist spots of northern Kyushu, it attracts many tourists from Japan's closest neighbor, the Republic of Korea.

The Kyushu National Museum has been built in an ideal location to introduce Japanese culture to Asia. No doubt those who visit will be able to experience the richly-layered nature of Japanese culture redefined as the serendipitous result of centuries of diverse cultural exchange.

TADAHIRO OHKOSHI

THE RISE OF ROBOTS

AN OVERVIEW OF JAPANESE ROBOTICS

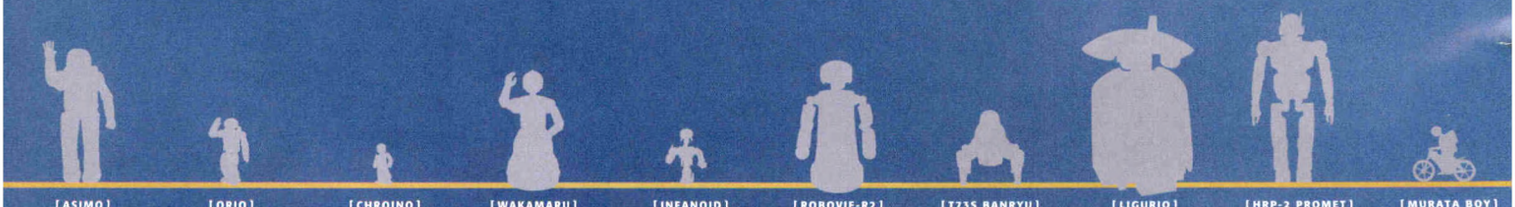
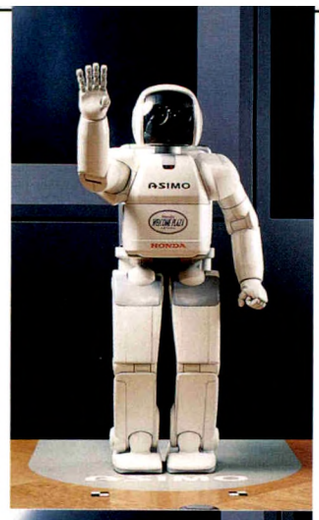


PHOTO: SEIYA KAWAMOTO

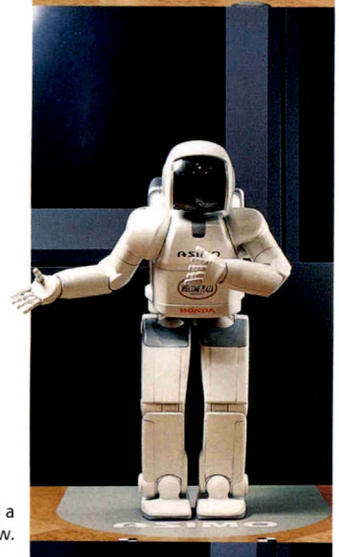
ROBOTS THAT WALK, ROBOTS THAT RUN, ROBOTS THAT SING AND DANCE—EVEN ROBOTS THAT CLEAN. RECENT ADVANCES IN ROBOTICS HAVE MADE POSSIBLE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF ROBOTS. THE DAY WHEN ROBOTS BECOME AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR EVERYDAY LIVES TRULY IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. SO, WHAT KIND OF ROBOT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE IN YOUR LIFE?

SPECIAL FEATURE REPORTING BY
SHIN'ICHI OKADA,
TADAHIRO OHKOSHI AND
MAYUMI NAKAMURA

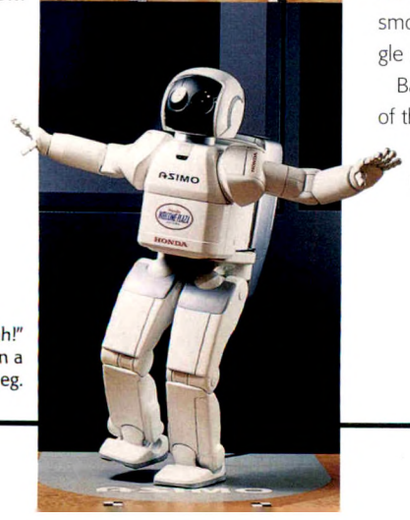


"Hi!" ASIMO extends a friendly greeting.

ASIMO adopts his bike-riding pose.



Affecting a polite bow.



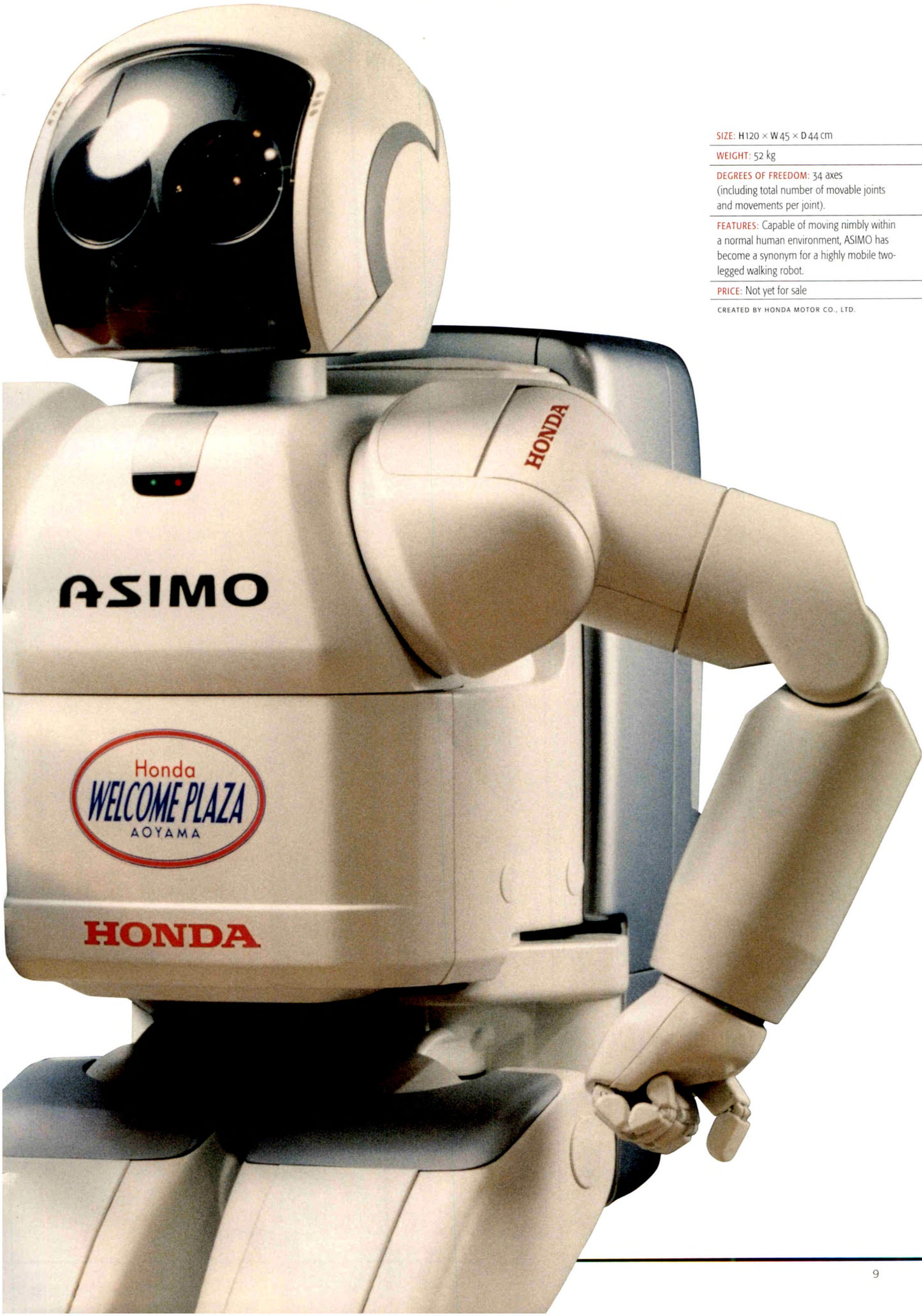
"Whooaah!" Balancing on a single leg.

WE LIVE IN AN AGE WHEN ROBOTS ARE BECOMING EVER MORE LIKE LIVING HUMAN BEINGS. WE INTRODUCE SOME HUMANOID ROBOTS WHO DREAM OF A FUTURE WHERE THEY CAN LIVE IN HARMONY WITH PEOPLE.

ASIMO

Is that a first-grader resolutely shouldering his schoolbag…? At 120 centimeters tall, the walk of the ASIMO robot is so lifelike that, from a distance, one is almost fooled. Each step appears so smooth without any trace of a single unnatural movement.

Back in 1986, Honda was one of the first companies to begin research into bipedal walking robots. The researchers at the company have carefully analyzed how humans walk and applied their findings to robot mobility. The ASIMO model, which made its debut in 2000, included the latest walking technology in addition to the best features of earlier models. Using the "i-WALK" technology, ASIMO could anticipate its next move in real time and shift its center of gravity accordingly. This allowed the robot to walk more smoothly than ever before. December 2004 brought further advances. ASIMO had already established itself as the standard in bipedal walking robotics, but the newest ASIMO could do more than just walk—it could run. Karel Capek (1890–1938), the Czech playwright who coined the word "robot," would probably be astonished to see a real robot actually jogging before his very eyes.



SIZE: H120 × W45 × D44 cm

WEIGHT: 52 kg

DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 34 axes
(including total number of movable joints and movements per joint).

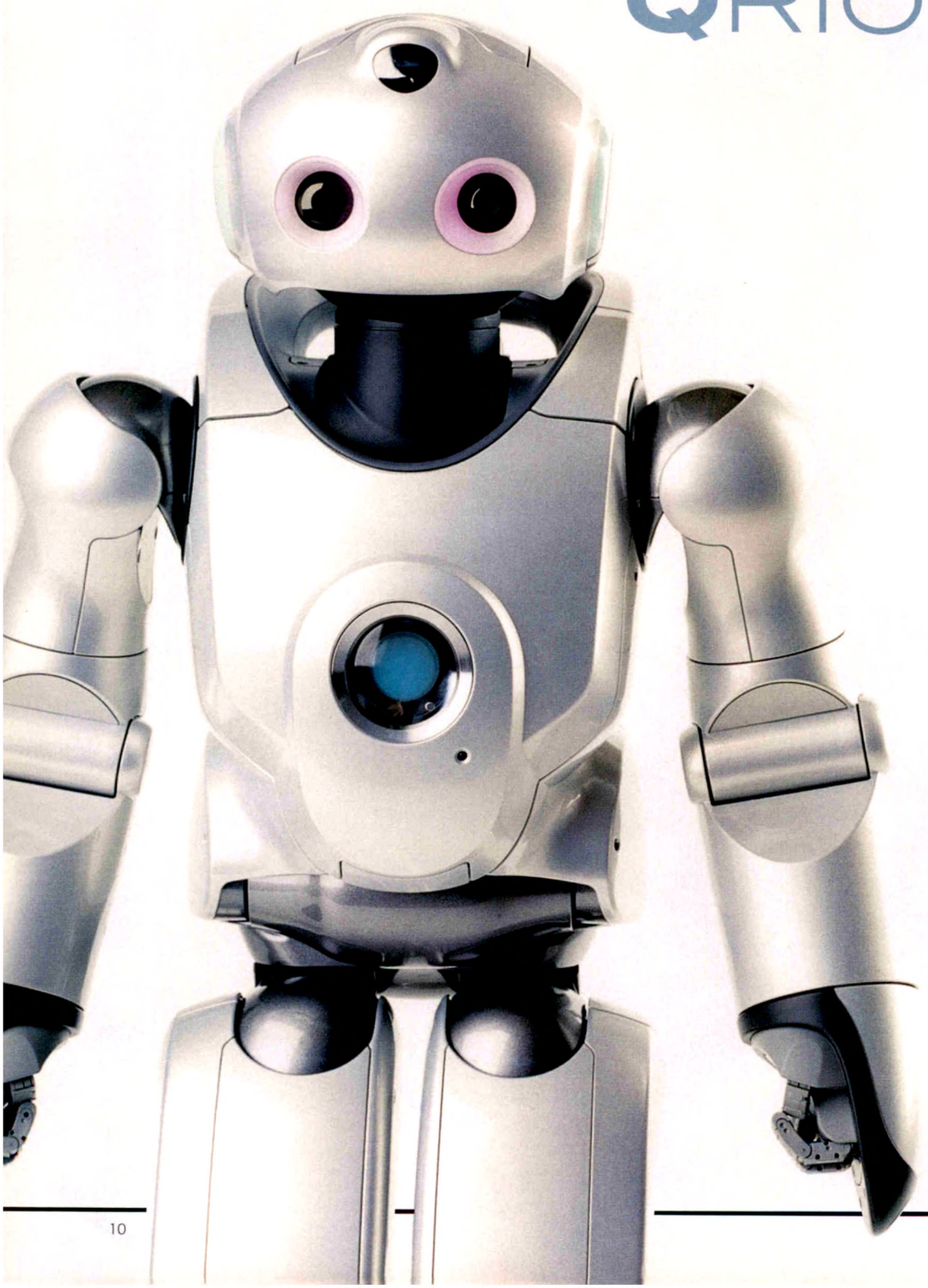
FEATURES: Capable of moving nimbly within a normal human environment, ASIMO has become a synonym for a highly mobile two-legged walking robot.

PRICE: Not yet for sale

CREATED BY HONDA MOTOR CO., LTD.

PHOTO: TADASHI OKOCHI

QRIO



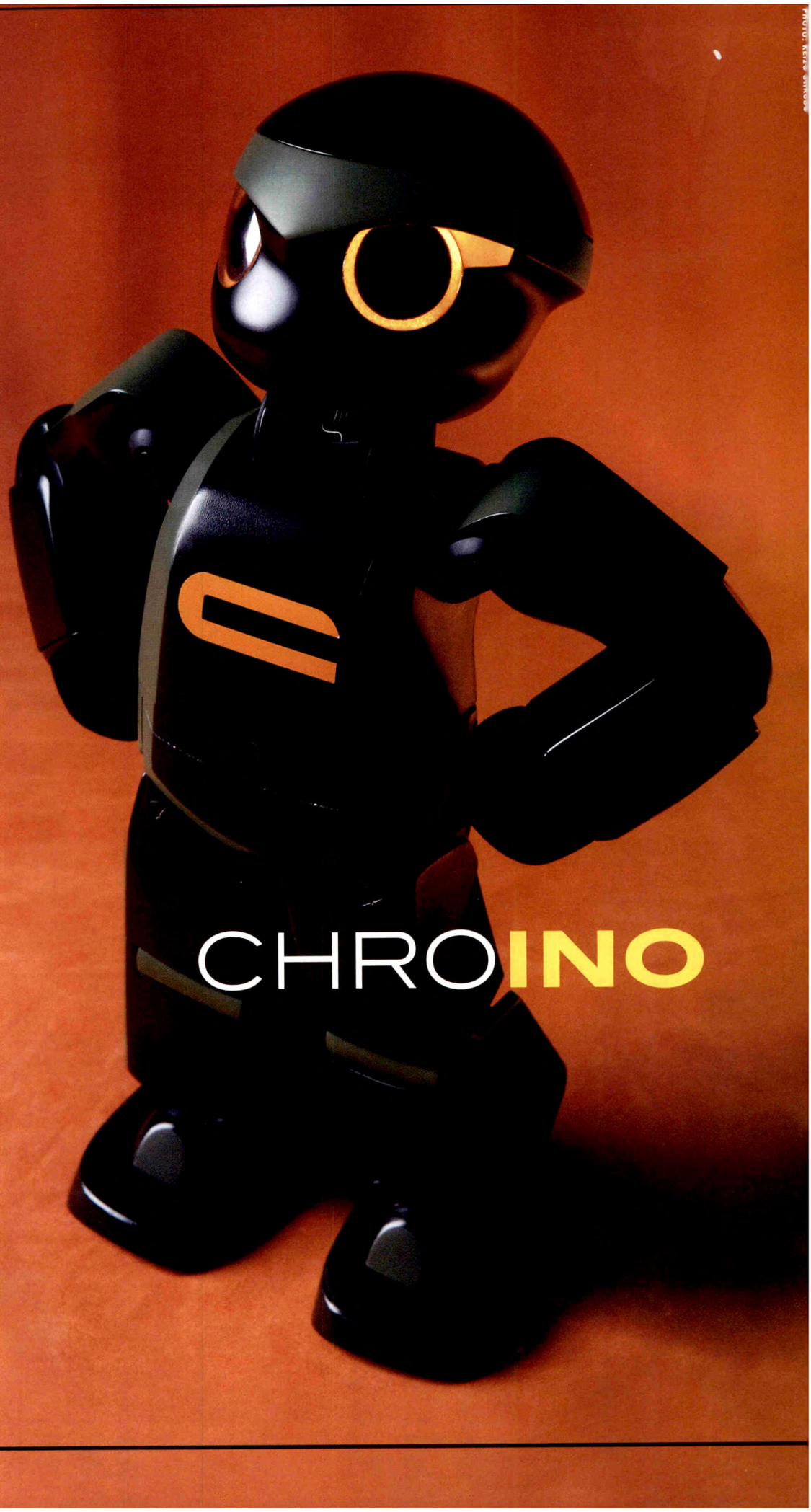
—"QRIO!"
—"Yes?"
—"Come here!"
—"Okay, I'm coming...
It's Mr. Yamashita, right?"

QRIO, an entertainment robot made by Sony, answers to the voice of the engineer Junichi Yamashita in a clear voice. The robot moves slowly closer and looks up at the face of the man who called him.

The QRIO model can learn and remember the faces and voices of several different people. It can communicate a full range of emotions using a wide variety of different expressions it creates by the color of its eyes or by gesturing.

The QRIO is designed to be cute and approachable—so cute, in fact, that some older people have even exclaimed, "Why it's just like my own grandchild!" Yamashita, who is in charge of communication skill development for QRIO, explains, "QRIO is mainly intended to entertain people. We are trying to create a robot that will be like one of the family." With such an adorable partner for playing soccer, doing *t'ai chi* exercises, or even dancing salsa together, daily life in the future is guaranteed to be fun.

SIZE: H58 × W27 × D19 cm
WEIGHT: 7 kg
JOINT DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 38 axes
FEATURES: Small bipedal entertainment robot
PRICE: Not for sale
CREATED BY SONY CORPORATION



CHROINO

Tomotaka Takahashi grew up on a diet of *Astro Boy* comics, and dreamed of becoming a robot expert. He has made that dream come true, and he keeps to a firm policy about how to properly design a robot, "Till now, the emphasis in robot development has been on the machine's inner workings. But I start from outside details like how the robot will move and what it will look like. My approach is to create robots with a clear identity."

Chroino is a perfect example of that approach in action. There are similarities between Chroino and Astro Boy. The robot's face exudes confidence. And in order to create motion that is as natural as possible, Chroino uses a new technology called "SHIN-Walk," in which each leg fully straightens during the step cycle.

The name Chroino is derived from a combination of the Japanese word for black, *kuroi*, and the English word 'chronicle.' The little robot was named the Coolest Invention of 2004 by the US-based magazine *TIME*. Just as its name indicates, Chroino is sure to be included when they come to write the chronicles of robot history.

SIZE: H35 cm

WEIGHT: 1.05 kg

DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 24 axes

FEATURES: A small bipedal walking robot

PRICE: Not yet for sale

CREATED BY: KYOTO UNIVERSITY VENTURE COMPANY ROBO GARAGE

IN 21ST-CENTURY JAPAN, ROBOTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO TAKE PART IN THE FUNCTIONING OF EVERYDAY HUMAN LIFE. WE TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE ROBOTS CREATED TO INTERACT WITH PEOPLE.

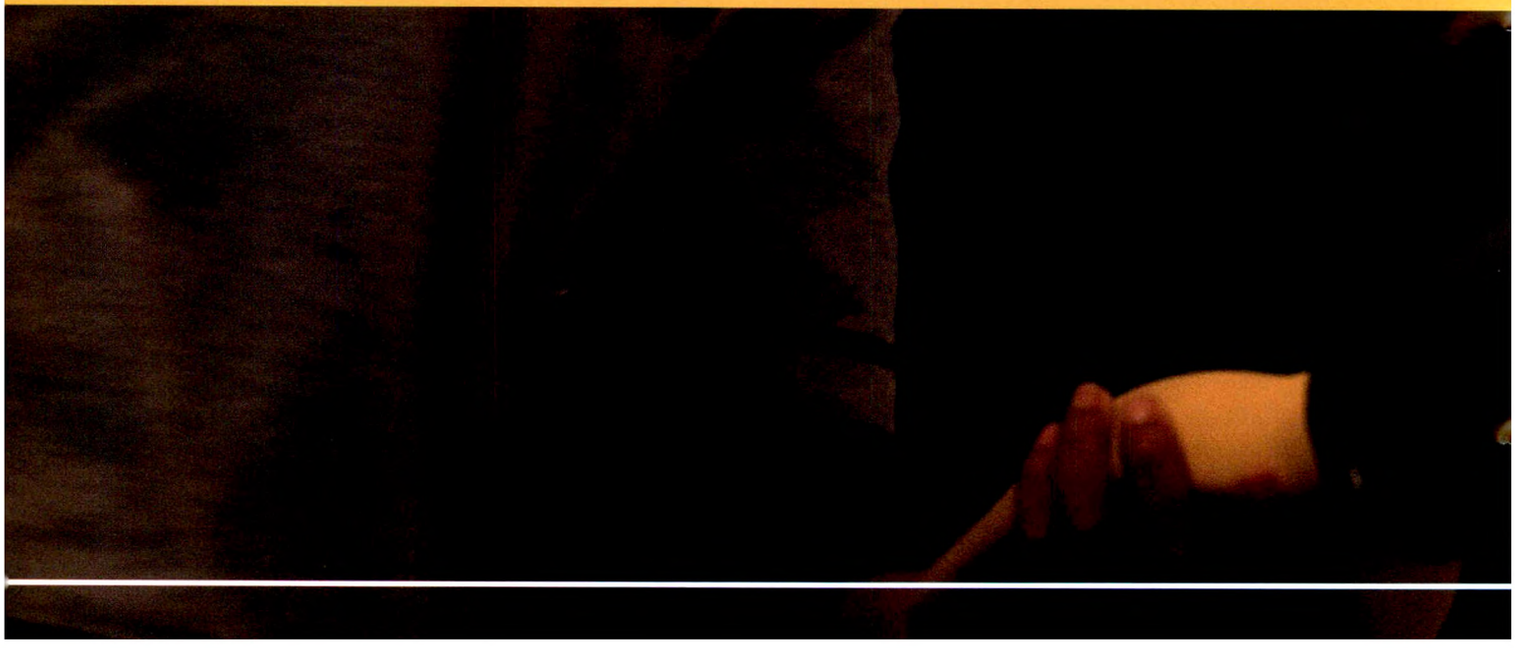
WAKAMARU

Life with a robot. It's 7:00 in the morning. Wakamaru comes in to wake you with a cheerful "Good morning!" "Showers are forecast for this afternoon," he says as he fills you in on the weather before you leave for work. And when you open the door upon returning home in the evening, Wakamaru is waiting to welcome you home. Could that be a smile on the waiting Wakamaru's face?

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries began commercial sales of its home-oriented robot, Wakamaru, last year in the fall. Sales were limited to just 100 units, and these were only available to customers living within the 23 wards of central Tokyo.

Wakamaru can distinguish between up to 10 different faces, and he can tailor his conversation to the preferences of each individual. Wakamaru has a constant connection to the Internet via a wireless LAN. He can read your new e-mail messages or the news to you. Wakamaru is specifically designed to live with people in the home environment, so he has numerous sensors to help him maneuver around obstacles. Safety is also part of his design concept. Extra space has been provided under his arms and behind his knees, for example, to prevent accidental pinching of fingers.

Wakamaru was happily whirring among the family members until just a little while ago. But at around 9:00 pm, he heads off on his own to his recharging station and shuts down for a peaceful night of rest. Ah, it seems that just as his height of one meter suggests, Wakamaru is still really only a little child.



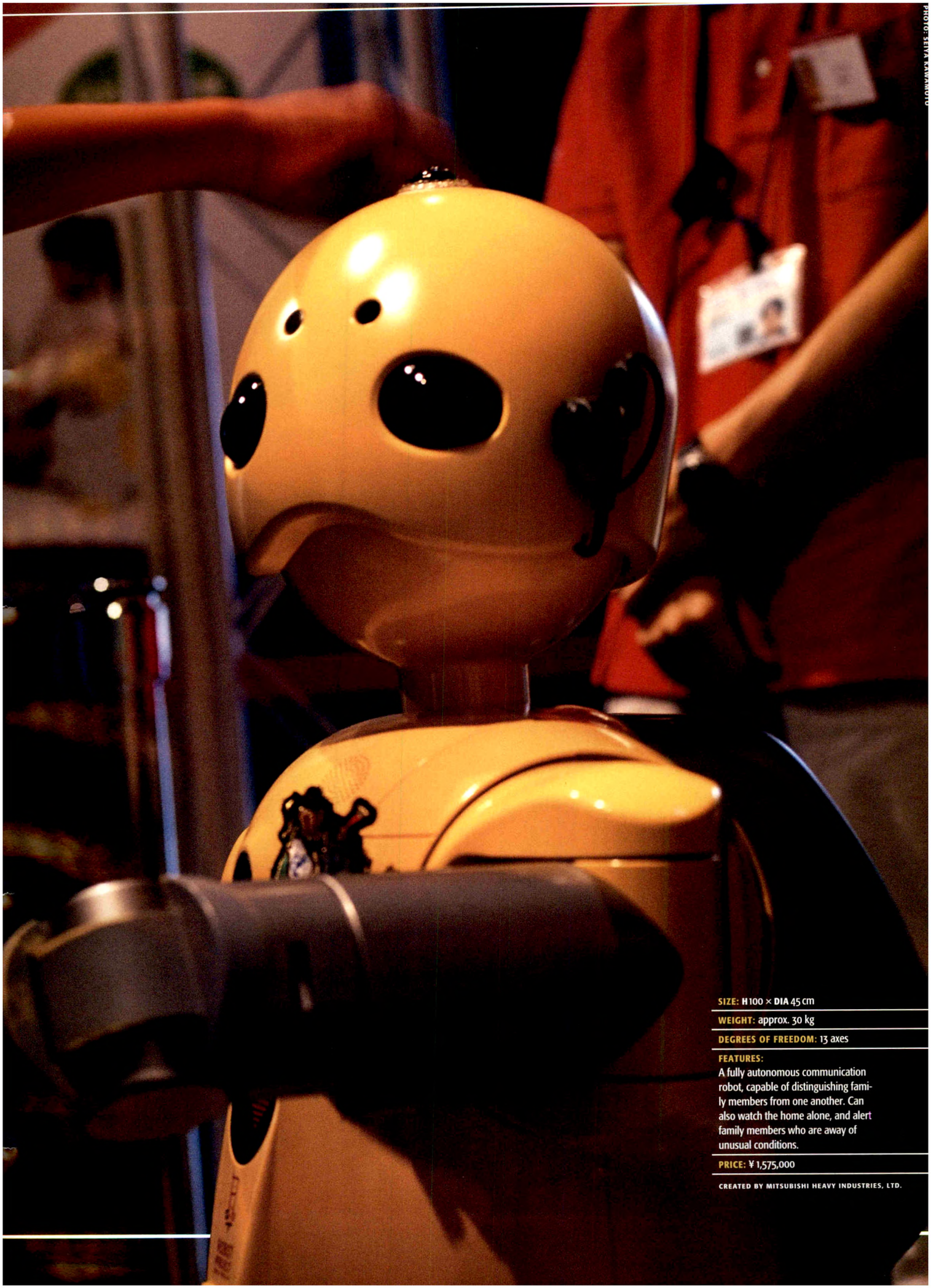


PHOTO: SEIYA KAWAMOTO

SIZE: H100 × **DIA** 45 cm

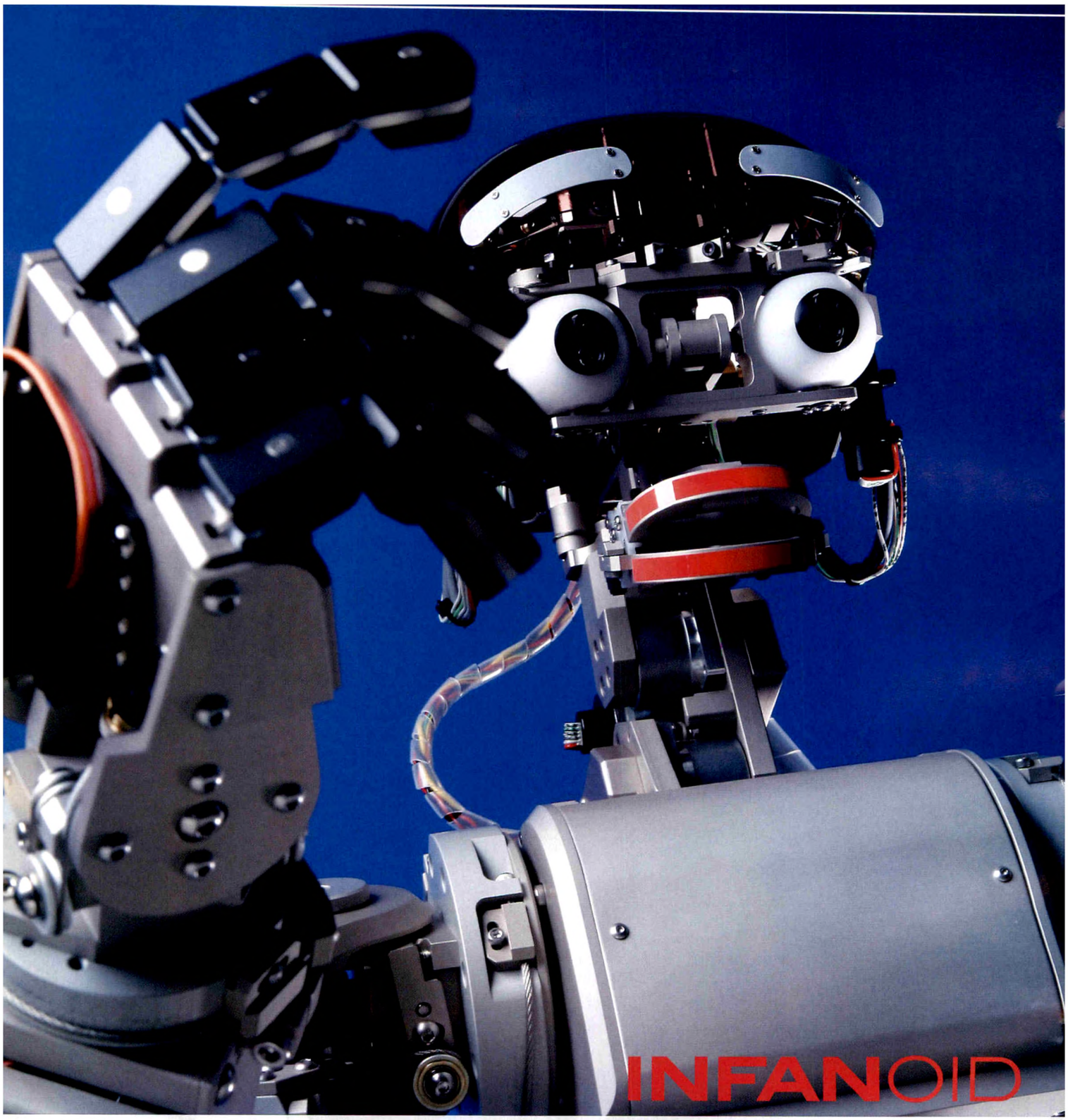
WEIGHT: approx. 30 kg

DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 13 axes

FEATURES:
A fully autonomous communication robot, capable of distinguishing family members from one another. Can also watch the home alone, and alert family members who are away of unusual conditions.

PRICE: ¥ 1,575,000

CREATED BY MITSUBISHI HEAVY INDUSTRIES, LTD.



INFANOID

SIZE: H 48 cm

WEIGHT: approx. 15 kg

DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 29 axes

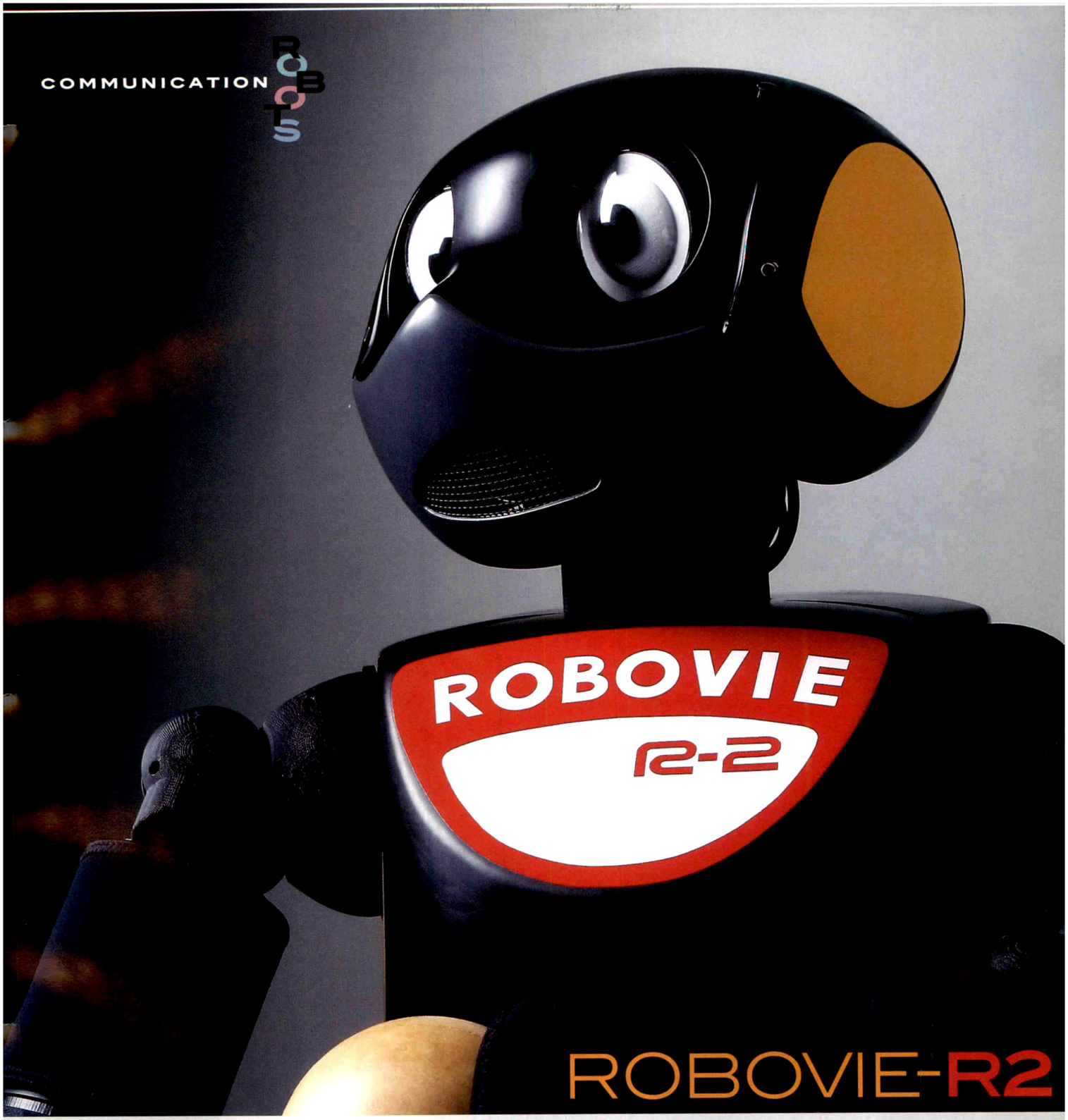
FEATURES: A robot for research into communication skills, capable of meeting the gaze of a human partner and of vocal and facial communication.

PRICE: Not for sale

CREATED BY KEIHANNA HUMAN INFO-COMMUNICATION RESEARCH CENTER, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Just as its name suggests, the Infanoid humanoid robot is truly an infant. A human baby acquires communication skills by first making eye-contact with its mother, then through shared attention and imitation. Using its mechanical body of electronic circuits, sensors and motors, the Infanoid robot reproduces the process by which a human infant learns to recognize the surrounding world.

Infanoid is an upper torso robot about the size of a small child. It makes eye-contact with humans using camera "eyes" equipped with both wide-angle and telephoto lenses. The robot can also pick up human voices using microphones mounted on the left and right sides of the head, and extract information from the received acoustic signal. Then it parrots back what it heard using a voice synthesizer. "In the future, robots will have to have highly developed communication skills. They will need to be able to read the subtleties of both spoken nuance and body language in order to understand what people are trying to say," says Hideki Kozima, Senior Research Scientist at the Keihanna Research Center. "The research we are conducting is aimed at just that kind of future."



ROBOVIE-R2

When it comes down to actually having robots become part of our daily lives, I think that people will probably be comfortable with a robot that has a human form," states Takahiro Miyashita, Robovie's developer and Senior Research Scientist at Intelligent Robotics and Communication Laboratories.

The Robovie-R2 is marketed as a research platform for studying communication using robots. Already some 20 units have been sold to universities and research institutes. The robot can be used for studies in voice recognition and image processing. And by using it in conversation with human partners, the Robovie-R2 can even be applied to research in psychology. The Robovie-R2 is equipped with seven different types of sensors—a total of 71 individual units—needed for communication. It uses wheels to move around, and has 17 degrees of freedom, which allows for a range of expression using body language.

Miyashita explains, "Robot design is diverging into two styles—'functional' and 'interface.' Robovie could eventually become an interface that is even easier to use than a keyboard or mouse."

SIZE: H 110 × W 56 × D 50 cm

WEIGHT: approx. 57 kg

DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 17 axes

FEATURES: Currently available as a platform for communication research.

PRICE: ¥ 5,040,000

CREATED BY INTELLIGENT ROBOTICS AND COMMUNICATION LABORATORIES, ADVANCED TELECOMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL

ROBOTS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY TRUSTY PARTNERS THAT HELP HUMANS AROUND THE HOUSE, IN THE WORKPLACE AND IN PUBLIC PLACES. WE TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE NEW BREED OF JAPANESE WORKERS.

T73S BANRYU

At first glance, the T73S Banryu looks like a large robot tortoise—you could be forgiven for thinking it is one of the "pet" robots that have become popular recently. The Banryu is, in fact, a sophisticated watchdog robot, giving security in the home.

The Banryu is fitted with an array of highly sensitive devices, including a surveillance camera and infrared, temperature and scent sensors. If any of these detect an intruder, an alarm is set off and the four-legged device scuttles at full speed to the scene of the intrusion. At the same time, the householders are alerted to the emergency situation by mobile phone; if they have a mobile phone fitted with television capability at hand, they can see in real time exactly what is happening in the house thanks to the Banryu's video camera. The scent detectors fitted to the Banryu also make it an effective fire detector.

The Banryu was the first robot produced with full capabilities for use in the home, and there are already some 50 of them faithfully keeping a sleepless eye on their masters' homes.

SIZE: H 65 × W 63 × D 90 cm

WEIGHT: approx. 35 kg

DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 12 axes

FEATURES: World's first home watchdog robot, keeps guard with a range of sensors

PRICE: ¥ 2,000,000

CREATED BY TMSUK CO., LTD.

HRP-2 PROMET

SHUICHIRO JINDA

The silver metallic body of the HRP-2 Promet makes it look like something that stepped off the set of a sci-fi movie. This general-purpose, humanoid robot was developed by AIST, an independent administrative institution based in Tsukuba City that promotes hi-tech research aimed at creating new industries.

HRP stands for "Humanoid Robotics Project," which aims to develop robots capable of cooperating with humans in a real environment. Many of the results of this project have been incorporated into the HRP-2, which can perform such human actions as getting up unaided if it falls over or crawling on all fours to get out of narrow spaces. The AIST aims to develop robots based on the HRP-2 which will be capable of operating in place of humans under conditions of severe heat, cold or radiation. The day is perhaps not far off when such extreme working robots will take over the work of humans in difficult or dangerous environments.

SIZE: H154 × W62 cm

WEIGHT: approx. 58 kg

DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 30 axes

FEATURES: Short, compact general-purpose humanoid robot without bulky backpack. Able to perform a range of sophisticated movements.

PRICE (5-YEAR RENTAL): ¥ 40,000,000

CREATED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (AIST)

LIGURIO

Security at the Expo 2005 Aichi, held from March to September last year, was a major issue. Part of the security for the venues was left in the capable hands of the Ligurio security patrol robot.

The Ligurio is fitted with an ultra-sensitive GPS (global positioning system), accurate to within an astounding 2–3 centimeters; it is able to move around freely without bumping into people, even in the extremely crowded Expo venues. The Ligurio is capable of alerting the security center to any unusual situations it detects, and if it comes across any suspicious objects it can pick them up for safe removal using the two extensible arms hidden under covers on both sides of the robot's body.

The Ligurio's rugged but functional design makes it well suited to carrying out security patrol work, and during the 185 days of the Expo event the Ligurio was a trustworthy guard for the venues, operating ceaselessly at maximum capability. An upgraded version of the Ligurio will be used in the future for carrying out nighttime street patrols in residential areas.

PHOTO: SEIYA KAWAMOTO

SIZE: H150 × W100 × D90 cm

WEIGHT: approx. 300 kg

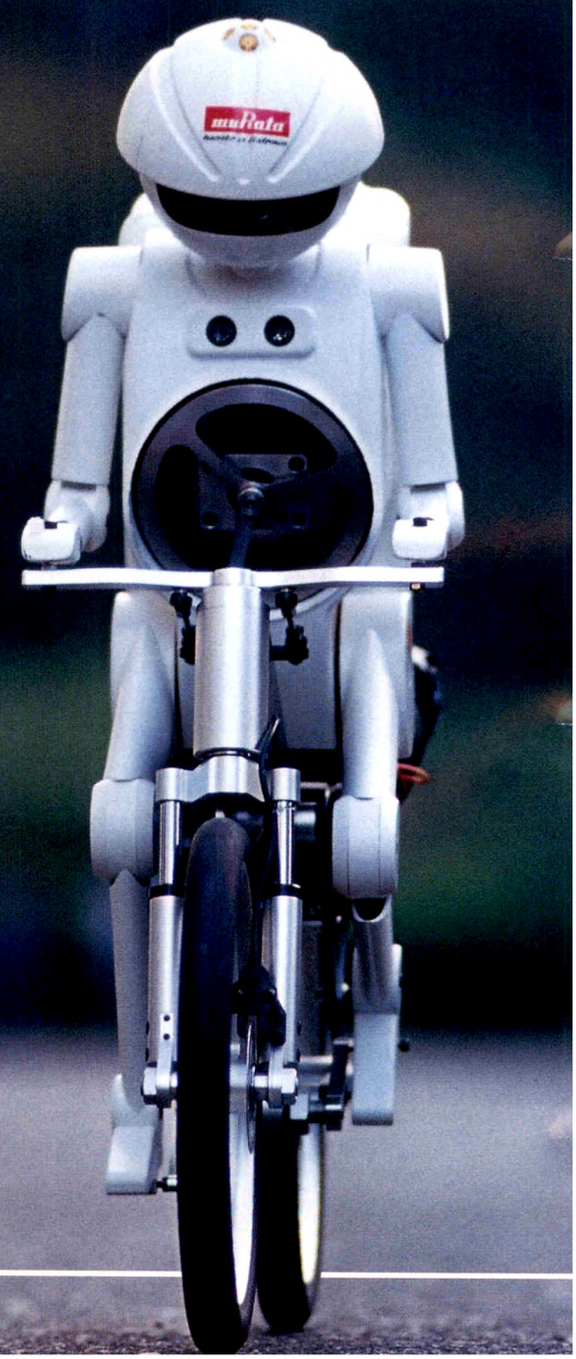
DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 30 axes

FEATURES: Automatically patrols indoor and outdoor parks and playgrounds, capable of removing suspicious objects.

PRICE: ¥ 65,000,000

CREATED BY TMSUK CO., LTD.

MURATA BOY



SIZE: H50 cm

WEIGHT: approx. 5 kg

DEGREES OF FREEDOM: 4 axes

FEATURES: Cycling robot capable of cycling at low speed and standing still without falling over.

PRICE: Not for sale

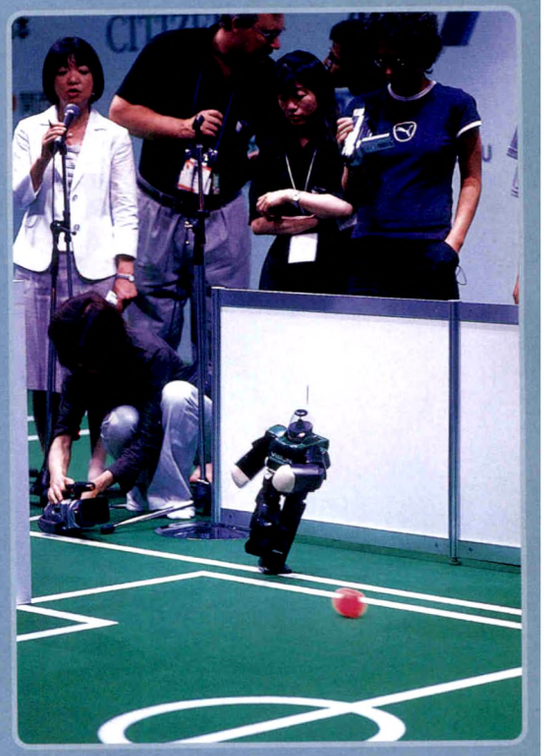
CREATED BY
MURATA MANUFACTURING CO., LTD.

SPORTING ROBOTS MAY SEEM SOMEWHAT STRANGE TO SOME, WHILE TO OTHERS THEY MAY SEEM QUITE APPEALING, BUT THESE SPORTING ROBOTS ARE ACTUALLY THE RESULT OF SERIOUS RESEARCH.

At an electronics exhibition you can expect to see some pretty nifty gadgets, but one of the biggest draws at last year's CEATEC Japan—the largest electronics exhibition in Asia—was a small robot pedaling away on a bicycle. This was Murata Boy, developed by electronics manufacturer Murata Manufacturing Co., Ltd. Exhibition goers were astounded to see Murata Boy make its way along a beam without falling off. If it detects an obstacle it can stop before crashing into it, and even when stationary the bicycle and robot combination remains upright without the need of a supporting leg. It can even pedal backwards from a stationary position, a feat not many human cyclists can accomplish.

Murata Boy's functions are made possible by the full use of the company's electronics components. A gyro-sensor detects slant to prevent Murata Boy from falling over—the same technology is used in digital cameras to prevent camera shake from resulting in blurred pictures. Obstacles are detected by an ultrasonic sensor—the same technology as the rear sonar in vehicles, which gives a warning to reversing drivers when they get too close to obstacles behind the car. The robot's shock sensor, which allows it to maneuver over bumps, is the same technology used in laptop computers to protect the hard disk when the computer is moved. Packed into Murata Boy's diminutive figure is an array of Japan's cutting edge technology—this doesn't seem to bother Murata Boy, though, whose only interest seems to be to keep on pedaling.

ROBOCUP



Human soccer players, beware!

RoboCup, which started in Japan, is very clear about its aim: to develop a team of fully autonomous humanoid robots by the year 2050 that can win against the human world soccer champion team.

This is, in fact, a serious project put together by Japanese artificial intelligence (AI) researchers. The concept was announced in 1995 and the first world championship was held in Nagoya in 1997. The 9th championship, RoboCup 2005, was held from July 13 to 19 last year in Osaka, with more than 30 countries and regions taking part. RoboCup is a landmark project for robotics and AI in just the same way that putting a man on the moon was a landmark project for the Apollo space program. The goal of the landmark project is set deliberately high—the intention being that a whole host of new technologies with new applications will be developed in working toward this goal.

Already, RoboCup is showing tremendous progress. Until last year, team play was judged to be beyond the capability of the existing technology and competitions were limited to events such as passing accuracy or penalty shots. However, last year's tournament saw the first "2 on 2" matches—in other words, rudimentary team play. Twenty teams from nine countries and regions took part, and the events were 2 on 2, Penalty Kick and Technical Challenge. For the second year in succession Team Osaka from Japan won the overall championship, receiving the Best Humanoid award. Team Osaka's entry was the robot VisiON NEXTA *(photo above)*, a joint development by a venture company, Osaka University, and others.

PHOTOS: SEIYA KAWAMOTO

ROBOTS & CULTURE

JAPANESE ROBOTICS RESEARCHERS CREATE ROBOTS OF THE HIGHEST STANDARD IN THE WORLD, BUT WHAT IS IT THAT SPURS THEM ON? WE ASKED YOJI UMETANI, WHO FOR MANY YEARS HAS PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN ROBOTICS RESEARCH.

The word "robot" was coined by the Czech writer Karel Capek (1890–1938) in his 1920 play *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*. The word came from the Czech word *robota*, meaning "manual work," and it carried with it the idea of a mechanical slave. Perhaps it is quite common in the West to talk of robots with this rather negative nuance. In Japan, however, people feel an affinity for robots, which have a sort of star status. Certainly at last year's Expo 2005 Aichi, the pavilions which featured performances of robots dancing and playing musical instruments were among the most popular of all the pavilions, attracting long queues of visitors day after day. Also, hordes of people flock with their families in tow to the various robot exhibitions held in different places throughout Japan, mingling with the experts to get a glimpse for themselves of the robots. It is quite common to see parents and children together posing with robots for commemorative snaps.

There is a view that points to the influence of Japanese *manga* featuring robots—of which *Astro Boy* is perhaps the best example—as a cause of this difference between Western and Japanese attitudes toward robots. I personally believe, though, that Japan's love for robots goes back way beyond that. In fact, I would go so far as to venture that it is something that has been handed down continuously since the Edo period (1603–1867).

During the Edo period a great many puppets were made that could move automatically thanks to strings and a mechanism of clockwork and springs. These *karakuri* puppets were enormously popular with the everyday people of the time, and it is very interesting to note that they were not practical devices used for advancing industry or for military technology—they were part of the program of any festival purely for entertainment. The people that made the puppets—the karakuri masters—around the country vied with each other to produce the finest techniques. Perhaps today's robotics researchers in Japan are no different, as their zeal to actually produce a walking, bipedal robot becomes the driving force that spurs them on to develop humanoid robots.

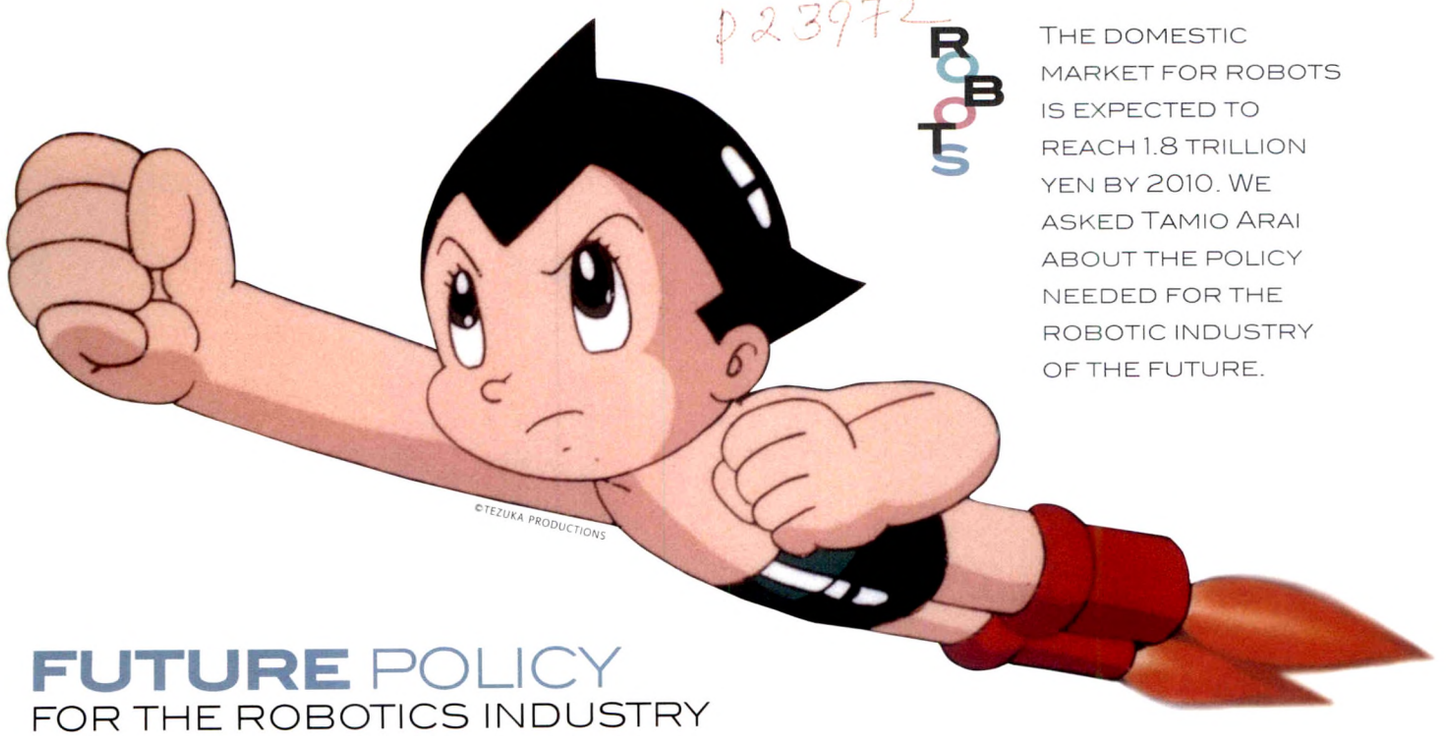
The knowledge, the technology and the sensitivity that give the Japanese people of today their fascination for, and love of robots, and also the vigor to develop them are deeply rooted in the culture of the nation. I think when seen from this viewpoint, we can indeed say that robots are, and have long been, an important intellectual asset of Japanese culture.

YOJI UMETANI specializes in biomechanics and robotics, and was a prominent figure in the establishment of the study of robotics in Japan. He was appointed Honorary President of the Robotics Society of Japan in 2003.

P23972

ROBOTS

THE DOMESTIC MARKET FOR ROBOTS IS EXPECTED TO REACH 1.8 TRILLION YEN BY 2010. WE ASKED TAMIO ARAI ABOUT THE POLICY NEEDED FOR THE ROBOTIC INDUSTRY OF THE FUTURE.



FUTURE POLICY FOR THE ROBOTICS INDUSTRY

Japan's robotics industry is not new—it began to establish its international predominance in the 1970s. In the field of humanoid robots in particular, the industry boasts some extremely advanced technology. With the scale of the industry amounting to about 600 billion yen, though, it remains relatively small. In order for the robotics industry to grow in the future, it will not be sufficient just to develop new robotics technologies; the creation of a social framework that will permit such growth is also essential. As an example of this, take the issue of the safety of robots working within human society. At present, the area in which robots work must by law be partitioned off, and robots cannot work together with humans. As a shared social foundation to enable robots and humans to work together, amendments need to be made to the law and new safety rules need to be drafted.

The dream for the future is to have a robot in every household, but for this to become reality it is imperative that we create an environment that is friendly to robots. It is extremely difficult to make robots with a built-in knowledge or recognition of every item in the house. But if we built, say, refrigerators with IC (integrated circuit) tags embedded in them, a household robot could then communicate with the refrigerator and the refrigerator could identify itself to the robot as a refrigerator. The robot would thus be able to recognize household objects with ease. The idea of embedding IC tags in household appliances is basic to the ubiquitous society of the future, in which all devices will be connected by ubiquitous networks. Social systems such as the fusion of robotics with the ubiquitous society will be necessary if we are to create an environment in which robots can comfortably function. The government has made the promotion of robot technology one of the pillars of its policies for technology, and it has started to construct various different frameworks of this type.

Robotics is one of the mainstays of Japanese technology, and as the population ages and the birthrate falls, robots have taken on increased importance as they are seen as one way to make up for the expected labor shortage. Robots of course work in factories, but in addition they are being used to carry out such chores as cleaning or security. There are limits, though—robots used for cleaning tasks, for example, can only operate within a certain area at present because of the limitations of the technology. In order to promote the development of robot technology, I believe it is important that robots are given sufficient recognition, even if at the time of introduction they can only perform at, say, 50% of the capacity of a human in the same job. Robotics is one of those areas where if you just try it out you can then improve on it as you go along.

An important issue for the society of the future is going to be how far we can improve the quality of our lives. Some degree of mechanization is going to be essential to do this, and the result is certainly going to be that robots will be playing an ever-greater role in our everyday lives in the future.

MASATSUGU YOKOYAMA

Above:
First broadcast on TV in 1963, *Astro Boy* was responsible for firing the interest in robots of many present-day Japanese robotics researchers.

Left:
A tea-serving doll from the Edo period, recreated from a plan drawn in 1796. When the guest takes the tea the doll stops turns around and returns to its original place.

Far left:
A variety of robots enthralled visitors at different venues around the Expo 2005 Aichi.

TAMIO ARAI has been in his present post of Professor of Precision Engineering at the School of Engineering of the University of Tokyo since 1987. He is currently serving as a member of the Robot Policy Study Group.

Japan & Russia

150 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

Last year marked 150 years since the signing of the Japan-Russia Amity Treaty, and both countries celebrated this landmark anniversary with a range of commemorative events. We review the origins of formal relations between Russia and Japan.

In 1855 two men met in Shimoda, present day Shizuoka Prefecture, to sign a treaty of amity. They were Russian Admiral Evfimii Vasilievich Putyatin and Japanese Controller Toshiakira Kawaji. In April last year two of their descendants—Mrs. Marina Putyatin and Mr. Shinji Kawaji—journeyed to Shimoda to mark the 150th anniversary of the historic negotiations that did so much to advance relations between Japan and Russia.

During the Edo period (1603–1867) Japan adopted a policy of isolation, limiting international trade to Nagasaki and dealing only with the Netherlands and China. In the 19th century, however, the US and European nations began to demand the opening of Japan to more outside trade.

Learning that America was to send a fleet to Japan, Russia dispatched Admiral Putyatin to Shimoda as ambassador plenipotentiary. Putyatin entered into negotiations with the Japanese plenipotentiary Inspector General Masanori Tsutsui and Controller Kawaji. As a result of those talks, the Japan-Russia Amity Treaty—a treaty of commerce, navigation and delimitation between Japan and Russia—was signed on February 7, 1855. As well as establishing formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, the treaty legally delineated the Japan-Russia border that had naturally formed between Etorofu Island and Urup Island. By signing the treaty, Russia officially confirmed that the four Northern Islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and Habomai belonged to Japan. "In this sense, the Japan-Russia Amity Treaty was the starting point for Japan-Russia relations," says Kazuhiko Uchida, Director of the Japan-Russia Exchange Program Division at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL INSTITUTE, THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

CONTROLLER
TOSHIAKIRA KAWAJI

Moreover, the negotiations progressed peacefully and amicably. This was a sharp contrast with the previous year's visit by US Commodore Matthew Perry, whose demand that Japan open its doors was backed by a show of force. "Japan's plenipotentiaries were

"The Launching of the *Heda*," a symbol of the friendship between Japanese and Russians at the time the Japan-Russia Amity Treaty was signed (from the collection of Toyo Bunko). During the negotiations a Russian ship broke apart in a tsunami, so Japanese shipbuilders and Russians worked together to build the *Heda* as a replacement.

samurai of the Tokugawa Shogunate and Putyatin was a Russian noble," notes Shinji Kawaji. "By negotiating as gentlemen in a dignified manner, the two delegations managed to build a relationship of trust."

However subsequent relations between Japan and Russia were not always smooth; the 20th century saw the Russo-Japanese War, the Second World War and the Cold War. The unilateral occupation of the four Northern Islands by the Soviet Union immediately following the Second World War and the detention of about 575,000 Japanese troops in Siberia further strained relations.

In spite of this turbulent background, cooperative relations with Russia have developed steadily since the second half of the 1990s. In sideline talks at the Sea Island Summit in the US in June 2004, Prime Minister Koizumi and President Putin agreed to mark the 150th anniversary of the Japan-Russia Amity Treaty in 2005 with commemorative events in their two countries, in recognition of the importance of this landmark year.

FROM THE COLLECTION OF MR. MORIO NAGI

ADMIRAL PUTYATIN

As mentioned above, the Japanese government invited descendants of leading figures in the negotiations to Shimoda in April last year for a commemorative ceremony and symposium. Other events included a sea voyage by 150 young Russians and Japanese, which combined visits to ports linking the two countries with a chance to develop greater mutual understanding, and a visit to Saint Petersburg by a Maritime Self Defense Force ocean training squadron.

Shinji Kawaji concluded his greeting at the commemorative symposium with these words: "There are no longer any nobles in Russia and the samurai have disappeared from Japan. Yet highly capable people hold positions of responsibility in both countries, just as they did 150 years ago. I am confident that a path toward the resolution of the issues currently facing our two countries will open up in the near future."

— SHIN'ICHI OKADA

Prime Minister Koizumi gives President Bush a guided tour of Kinkaku-ji Temple.

JAPAN-US SUMMIT MEETING

On November 16, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi met with US President George W. Bush for a Japan-US Summit Meeting. It was President Bush's first visit to Japan for two years.

On the morning of November 16, Prime Minister Koizumi accompanied President Bush and First Lady Laura Bush on a tour of Kyoto's Kinkaku-ji Temple. Prime Minister Koizumi greeted the President and the First Lady at the main gate of the temple and together they strolled around the grounds of the temple viewing the gold leaf inlaid Golden Pavilion and Kyoko Pond.

After the tour, Prime Minister Koizumi and President Bush retired to the Kyoto State Guest House for a summit meeting, which lasted approximately one and a half hours. After the meeting, the two leaders held a joint press conference. Kicking off the press conference, Prime Minister Koizumi stated, "The stronger and closer the Japan-US relations are, the more likely we are able to forge better relations with countries around the world, starting with China, the Republic of Korea, and other Asian countries. The United States strongly supports Japan's efforts to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. I would also like to advance our cooperation in the reform of the UN. Furthermore, although we have to be prepared for a long and difficult fight against terrorism, Japan must make great efforts toward the establishment of stable and democratic governments in cooperation with the international community."

President Bush replied, "It's no secret in my country that you and I have got a good relationship. We've got a good friend in Japan. I appreciate the contributions that the Japanese people are making in both Iraq and Afghanistan."

In addition, the two leaders agreed to continue to cooperate on such areas as US base realignment, reconstruction and humanitarian assistance to Iraq, measures to combat global terrorism, BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis) and the eradication of avian influenza.

CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

Prime Minister Koizumi and President Puti shake hands prior to their general meetin;

JAPAN-RUSSIA SUMMIT MEETING

Prime Minister Koizumi held a summit meeting with President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation on November 21. The meeting took place at the Prime Minister's Official Residence and lasted approximately two and a half hours.

At the meeting, Prime Minister Koizumi stated that negotiations toward resolving the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands are essential for the conclusion of a peace treaty. "I would like to continue on the current path toward a mutually acceptable solution," he said.

President Putin responded, "I agree that it is imperative that we work toward a mutually acceptable solution of the boundary delimitation issue. However, this issue is a direct result of the Second World War, and to change tack at this stage would cause a chain reaction which would entail having to conduct a major policy review, and this would prove very difficult indeed."

Both leaders agreed on the necessity for further cooperation regarding the conclusion of a peace treaty based on previous agreements and documentation, and to find a solution that will be to the benefit of both countries.

The two leaders also agreed to cooperate over the construction of an oil pipeline and toward bilateral negotiations on Russia's accession to the WTO.

At the joint press conference which followed the summit meeting, Prime Minister Koizumi said, "I would like to express my heartfelt welcome to President Putin on his visit to Japan in this landmark year of the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Japan-Russia Amity Treaty. Russo-Japanese relations are progressing in a wide range of areas based on the Japan-Russia Action Plan adopted in 2003. Aiming to expand the cooperation based on this Action Plan, we have compiled and signed 12 documents."

President Putin replied, "Russia and Japan established their relations a century and a half ago, and this event has set the tone for this visit. I would like to emphasize that our negotiations have been constructive and substantial."

KOIZUMI ATTENDS APEC MEETING

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi attended the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting held in the port city of Busan in the southeast of the Republic of Korea (ROK) on November 18 and 19, 2005.

On the first day, discussions focused on issues concerning economy and commerce. The multilateral trade negotiations (Doha Round) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) were at the heart of the discussions at the meeting, and the member economies reached a consensus on the necessity of cooperation for the success of negotiations.

Following a dialogue with ABAC (APEC Business Advisory Council), Prime Minister Koizumi held a meeting with Roh Moo-hyun, the President of the Republic of Korea. At the meeting, the two leaders held a frank exchange of opinions on matters of common interest to both countries, such as bilateral relations and North Korea issues. Both leaders agreed on the necessity of actively promoting personnel and cultural exchanges between their respective countries and confirmed that it is imperative that the two countries work closely together with the US on resolving the issue of North Korea's nuclear development program.

Prime Minister Koizumi also met with President Ricardo Lagos Escobar of the Republic of Chile, and the two leaders reached a consensus to launch negotiations toward the conclusion of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Japan and Chile.

On the evening of the same day, Prime Minister Koizumi inspected the demonstrations given by the local IT industry and attended the Gala Dinner, a special celebratory banquet which was held during the two-day meeting.

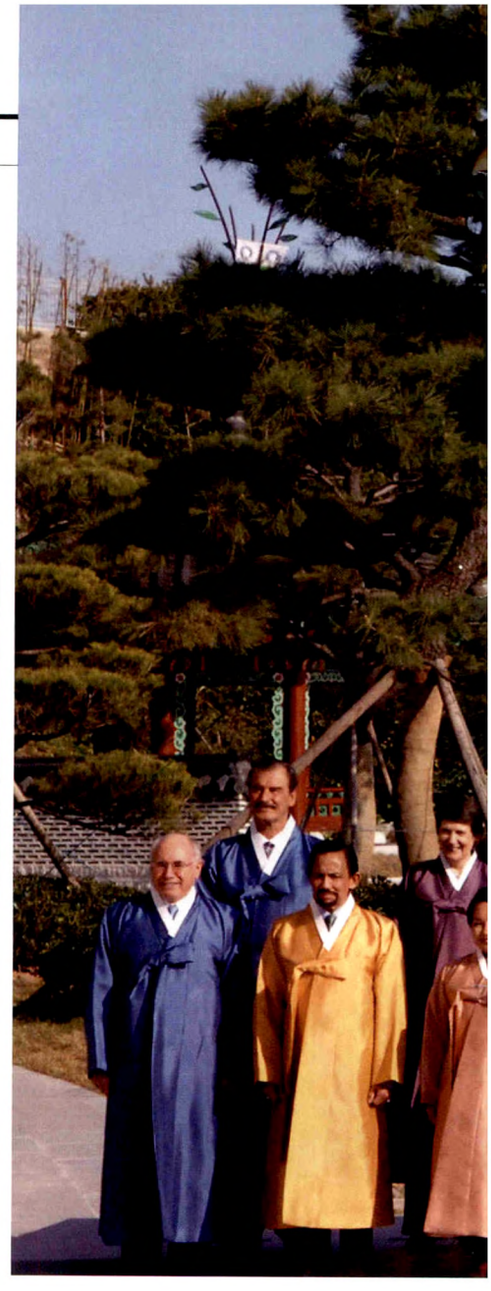
On the morning of November 19, Prime Minister Koizumi participated in the discussions held by the APEC leaders. On the agenda were such pressing issues as measures to combat avian influenza, the rising price of oil and terrorism. Koizumi announced that Japan had unveiled an action plan to deal with the new strain of influenza and would cooperate fully with the international community toward seeking the eradication of this global menace.

After the leaders' luncheon meeting, the leaders donned *turumagi*, the traditional dress of Korea, and assembled outside the Nurimaru House, which was the venue for the morning discussions, for a commemorative group photograph.

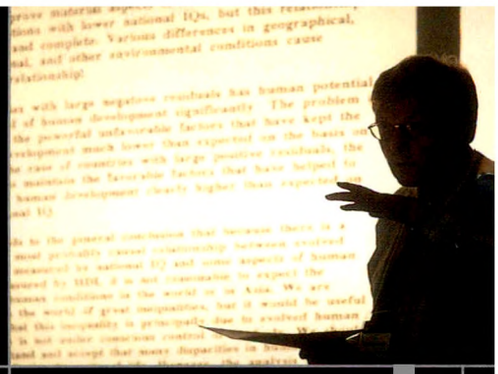
Thereafter, the leaders declared in the Busan Declaration to "advance freer trade" with a view to the expeditious promotion of the multilateral trade negotiations (Doha Round) of the WTO, and to strengthen protection of intellectual property rights. They also declared their intention to achieve a "safe and transparent Asia-Pacific region" through the implementation of avian influenza countermeasures and to respond to the steep rise in the price of crude oil.

Later, Prime Minister Koizumi met with Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin. At the meeting, the leaders signed the Japan-Canada Economic Framework, a framework to strengthen relations in 15 different fields including trade, investment, food safety and tourism.

After the conclusion of the APEC meeting, Prime Minister Koizumi attended a press conference. He stated, "It has been agreed that Japan will host the APEC meeting in 2010. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the government of the ROK for arranging such a vibrant setting for our fruitful discussions, and this will certainly provide a very useful frame of reference for Japan when it comes to host the 2010 meeting."



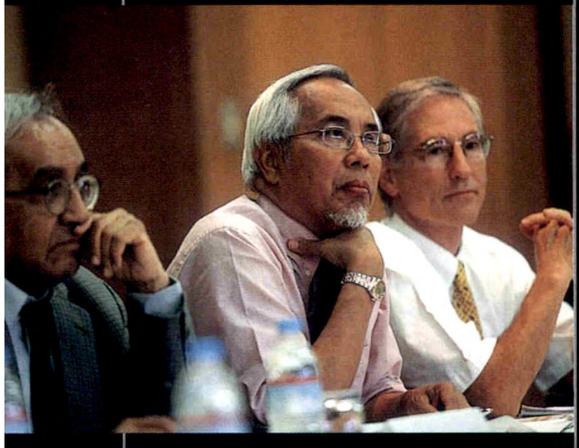
Above: Wearing the traditional Korean *turumagi,* the leaders of the APEC member states gather at Nurimaru APEC House for a group photograph.
Bottom left: The leaders of Japan and the ROK attend a bilateral summit meeting. • **Bottom right:** The APEC leaders gather for discussions.



proposing global solutions

Much of Asia is experiencing rapid economic development, with China and India in particular showing remarkable growth. However, Asia faces a number of challenges resulting from this sudden economic growth. The region's cities are blighted by atmospheric pollution and the growth of vast slum areas, creating a pressing need for improvements to the urban environment; then there is the problem of infectious diseases such as AIDS, SARS and avian influenza. These challenges have built up into a seemingly insurmountable mountain, but solutions must be found. Furthermore, Asian countries face the dilemma of balancing economic growth with the need to work to solve global problems such as climate change, energy, and food and water supplies.

PHOTOS: SEIYA KAWAMOTO



rticipants the ynamism d Uncer- nty in Asia" nference in ptember 005 *(above)* ten keenly a key pres- tation.

An international conference was held last year on September 9 and 10 at the Kyoto International Conference Hall to provide a forum for thorough discussion of these diametrically opposed bright and dark sides to Asia, and to look at strategies to create a sustainable future for the region. Titled "Dynamism and Uncertainty in Asia," the conference was hosted by the Science Council of Japan.

"A feature of this conference was that we emphasized from a social scientific viewpoint what sort of effect things like the rapid growth of economic globalization, as well as regional military and energy security have on the creation of sustainable growth in Asia," explains President of the Science Council of Japan Kiyoshi Kurokawa. There were some 100 participants at the conference. About 20 of these were invited from overseas, including such luminaries as Jusuf Wanandi, the Chairman of the Supervisory Board and Member of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and Dr. Bruce Alberts, Professor of the University of California and former President of the US National Academy of Sciences; there were also experts in environmental issues, political science, economics and international relations. The setting allowed for very close-knit, intimate discussions. One of the participants, Rector of the United Nations University Hans van Ginkel, noted, "The composition of participants reflected tremendous diversity, making it an interdisciplinary conference with an extremely broad range of knowledge and ideas."

The Science Council of Japan was inaugurated in 1949, soon after the end of the World War II. It was established by the government, in keeping with the policy that science is the cornerstone of a civilized country. The members are appointed by the Prime Minister, and come from fields ranging from humanities and social sciences to natural sciences. The main role of the Council is to collate the ideas and specialized knowledge of the members and put forward policy proposals for society and the government. In recent years the Council has invested effort into making international proposals that transcend national boundaries. For example, it has hosted an international conference every year since 2000 on the subject of sustainability and technology, and last year's conference was part of this series. The Council also has a continuing commitment to the activities of the Science Council of Asia, which brings together leading scientists from countries across Asia.

"In order to find solutions to global problems, countries need to act in step with each other, without regard for polit economic advantage," says Council President Kurokawa, explaining the Council's recent involvement in the international arena. "Now more than ever the scientific community needs to speak out proactively to give scientific, objective policy proposals. These proposals should be policies for concerted action."

An event that served to highlight the existence of the world's scientific community took place at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, UK, held in July last year. Prior to the G8 Summit, the Science Council of Japan together with the national academies of science of the other G8 member nations and of Brazil, India and China made a joint declaration stating that climate change is definitely occurring, and that it may be attributable to human activity. At the Summit, the assembled G8 leaders all expressed their full agreement.

The Earth Simulator, developed by JAMSTEC—Japan's leading marine research center—simulates the temperatures of the world's oceans. Able to accurately identify global scale phenomena, this super-computer is the focus of much attention from the international scientific community.

CROSS-BORDER EFFORTS ARE NEEDED TO SOLVE GLOBAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS CLIMATE CHANGE. THE SCIENCE COUNCIL OF JAPAN, REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF JAPAN'S SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY, HAS BEEN CONTRIBUTING TO THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS.

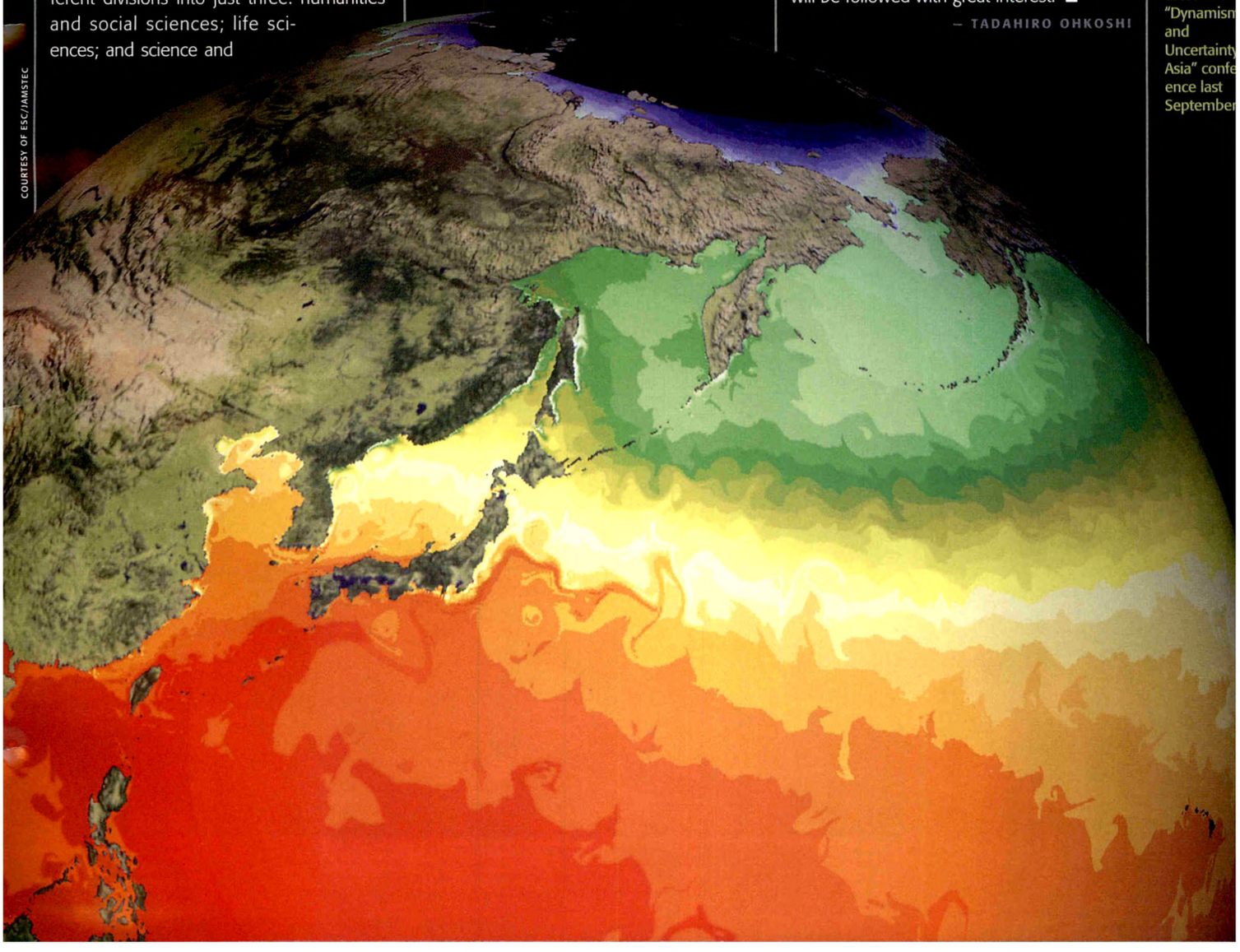
"Retreating from its stance that there is no scientific basis to climate change, the US officially acknowledged for the first time the existence of the problem of global climate change," says Kurokawa. "America has steadfastly refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, so this acknowledgement certainly has huge symbolic significance. There can be no doubt that the influence of scientific organizations on the policy decisions of countries around the world is going to grow much stronger in the future."

In order to be able to respond to this global trend, in October last year the Science Council of Japan carried out its biggest restructuring since it was established. The first stage of the reorganization was to consolidate the Council's seven different divisions into just three: humanities and social sciences; life sciences; and science and engineering. The second stage was to greatly rejuvenate the membership by introducing an upper age limit of 70 and replacing some 80% of the 210 members. As a result the average age fell by five years to 59 and the number of female members increased from 13 to 42, so that now some 20% of the members are women. "The result of this organizational reshuffle has been that we have greatly improved our mobility as an organization making policy proposals," says Kurokawa. "In the future, we want to be able to respond immediately in the event of a disaster such as a large-scale earthquake."

The 2008 G8 Summit will be held in Japan, and a report reviewing progress on the Kyoto Protocol will be discussed. As an important player in this process, the Science Council of Japan will take on a big responsibility. Among the many problems threatening the world, in particular we cannot afford to postpone action on climate change. The movements of the Science Council of Japan will be followed with great interest.

— TADAHIRO OHKOSHI

President of the Science Council of Japan Kiyoshi Kurokawa gives the opening address at the "Dynamism and Uncertainty in Asia" conference last September



COURTESY OF ESC/JAMSTEC

Skin Deep

Women in Japan are paying more attention to beauty care than ever before. Mayumi Kurata, a journalist specializing in beauty-related stories, introduces trends in the Japanese beauty market in a four-part series. Her introductory report looks at skincare.

A magazine targeted at women in their 20s and 30s carries out an in-depth survey of its readers nearly every year. This helps editors to gain an up-to-date picture of how real women feel and think. And a look at survey responses reveals some major changes in how Japan's women perceive beauty – in the past decade alone.

For example, when asked what sort of compliments make them feel especially good, the vast majority of readers several years ago said they liked to be told they looked young or cute. However, in recent times more and more readers have answered that they like to be praised for having nice skin.

Youth does not last forever. And of course, the same holds true for young-looking skin. Such being the case, proper care of one's skin is essential in order to maintain youthful beauty as long as possible. And Japanese women do take their skincare seriously, very seriously. Most women use both a makeup remover and facial cleanser in their grooming routines – effectively washing their faces twice. It is also taken for granted that cleansing is followed by several more steps, such as the application of a toner, and then a serum and a lotion or cream. Some women who are especially concerned with good skincare include even more products in their beauty routine. There are pre-toners, applied right after cleansing and before application of the toner in order to improve absorption of the toner. Other options include special eye treatment creams to reduce the appearance of tiny wrinkles around the eyes, and oil control lotions to limit T-zone shine and minimize pore size. With all these different steps, women may use five, six, or even more products just in their morning and evening skincare routines. Many women also adapt their skincare methods by the season. There are skin-lightening products for use in spring and summer, and autumn and winter skincare kits often include moisturizing and anti-aging products.

Why are Japanese women so concerned with skincare? Perhaps it is because, compared to Caucasian faces, Asian faces tend to have less dramatic facial features. Their eyes, noses, and mouths are not pronounced. The bone structure of Asian faces also results in a relatively larger "flat" area of the cheeks and forehead. Thus, many women feel that the overall impression given by an Asian face is more affected by the condition of the skin than that of a Caucasian face.

Japanese culture also plays into the increasing interest in skincare. Japanese place a particular emphasis on newness and cleanliness. Skin discolorations that arise are associated with dirt or impurity. Creases in the forehead and wrinkles at the corners of the eyes are associated with age and decay. The pursuit of perfect skin with no discolorations or wrinkles would appear to be a major factor behind the strong interest in skincare.

One long-established French cosmetics multinational reports that Japanese women consumers account for close to half of its total skincare sales. That proportion drops when products such as fragrance or makeup are included, but the numbers certainly speak volumes about the passion Japanese have for good skincare. There are numerous magazines in Japan devoted entirely to providing information about new cosmetic products and the latest beauty news. Japan may be the only country in the entire world that can boast a solid subscriber base for specialized magazines like these.

Precisely because of this avid interest in cosmetics, many domestic and international companies rate Japanese women as among the world's most sophisticated and discriminating cosmetics consumers, and even judge that if a product is successful in Japan, it can be successful anywhere. And glimpsed just over the horizon from Japan is the huge potential of the greater Asian market. The day when the women of East and Southeast Asia have a similar level of concern about skincare is probably not so far in the distant future.

A beauty journalist for more than 20 years, **MAYUMI KURATA** gained experience in the editorial and production departments of a women's magazine, later going freelance. She currently writes for the beauty sections and independent columns in women's magazines and newspapers.

"Japanese women may use five, six, or even more products just in their morning and evening skincare routines"

PHOTO: HITOSHI TSUCHIDA

Doraemon Gadget Dispenser

Ask any Japanese person, and they'll probably tell you that Doraemon is just the kind of loyal friend they would love to have. This cuddly blue character is well equipped with a magical tummy pocket full of helpful gizmos. Fit the *take-kopta* whirligig on your head, for example, and you're suddenly able to fly. Step through the *dokodemo* door to anywhere, and well, you're already right where you wanted to go. The Bandai Company has re-released its 1979 hit toy, the *Chogokin Gacha-Gacha*, which, just like the "real" Doraemon, comes stocked with a supply of nifty gadgets. A dozen of these little treasures are packaged in ten bubble capsules that pop out of Doraemon's tummy with a tug on his tail. Seven of the gadgets can be fitted onto the 14-centimeter Doraemon doll. This nostalgic toy is a sure-fire bet to delight young and old fans alike.

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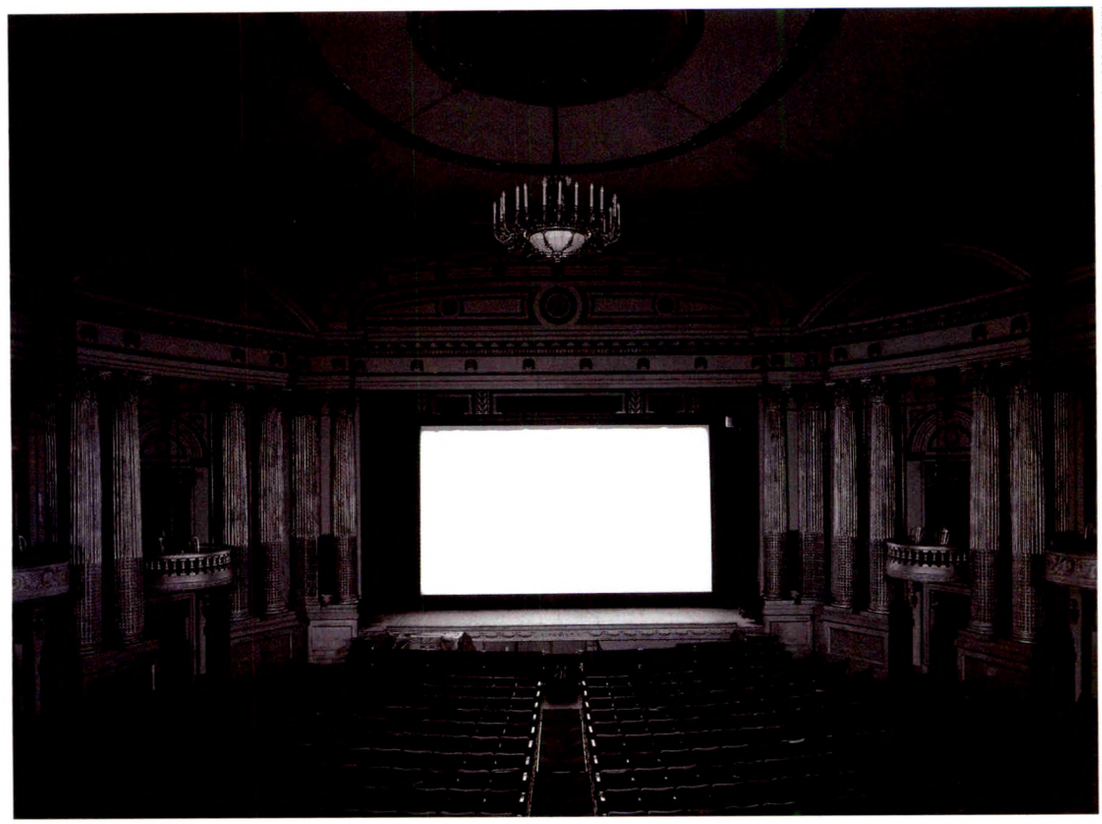


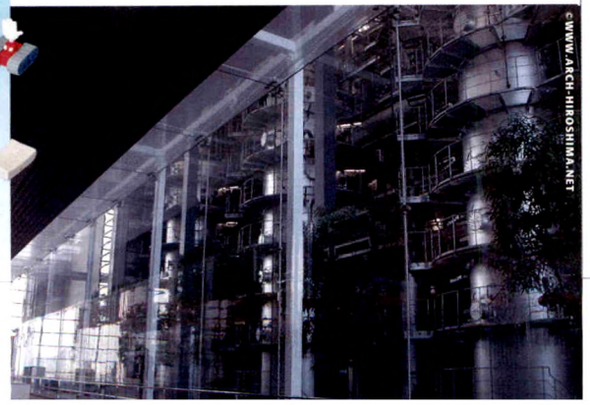
HIROSHI SUGIMOTO AT *RINGLING, BARABOO*, 1995

HIROSHI SUGIMOTO: "END OF TIME" EXHIBITION

Internationally renowned artist Hiroshi Sugimoto is currently holding a retrospective exhibition of his work. This is the first opportunity to survey the series of works he has produced over the last 30 years. Visualizing the concept of time has been a recurring theme in each of his series, such as "Dioramas," "Portraits" and "Theaters." The exhibition features approximately 100 works including new and previously unreleased series such as "Colors of Shadow" and "Conceptual Forms." In recent years Sugimoto has also shown great interest in architectural space and was involved in the overall design of the exhibition. The exhibition closes at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo on January 9, 2006, and then moves on to the United States, first to the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington and then to the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas.

The *Future* of *Waste*

The Hiroshima Naka Waste Incineration Plant is attracting attention for its innovative design. The key to the popularity of this waste disposal plant located on the coast of the Seto Inland Sea is its well-lit, see-through glass atrium. The huge, silver-colored, gas-vacuum towers on the other side of the glass are every bit as impressive as contemporary artworks. The reconstruction of the Naka plant was one of the Hiroshima 2045 Peace and Create projects that aim to create well-designed public facilities with an eye to 50 years in the future. Its designer, Yoshio Taniguchi, considered showing the workings of a waste incineration plant to be important in terms of raising environmental awareness. This is why everything, even the control room and the operations room, is visible through huge glass panels. While most of the visitors had previously been groups of elementary schoolchildren on social studies outings, now the majority are members of the general public.



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Free & Easy Furniture

Osaka's Soz Corporation has released a brand of block furniture called *Re:mo*. Furniture can be easily assembled using polyethylene resin boards to make all sorts of practical items, and the concept first manifested itself in Soz's *Carpenter Block mini* product. *Re:mo* has a basic starting shape, but can be changed to match individual tastes and needs to produce items of furniture such as chairs, tables and magazine racks *(photo)*. Made of thin boards, it can be easily stored and does not take up space when not in use. The more pieces we have, the greater the scope to enjoy adding an element of creativity to our lives. *Re:mo* comprises the 28-piece basic starting block and includes a 121-piece *Carpenter Block mini* set.

©SOZ CORPORATION

GOVERNMENT

Koizumi Inspects Coast Guard's Disaster Prevention Base

CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

On November 24, 2005, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi made a tour of inspection of the Japan Coast Guard's disaster prevention base in the port of Yokohama and viewed firsthand the measures being undertaken to protect Japan's shoreline area. The Prime Minister's first task was to board the disaster response patrol boat, *Izu*, from where he viewed a drill which involved a Japan Coast Guard security boat apprehending a suspicious vessel that had trespassed into Japan's territorial waters. His next stop was a visit to the Yokohama Maritime Disaster Prevention Base, the center for response operations to large-scale marine disasters in the Kanto region. Here, Koizumi observed a staged rescue of survivors from a fishing boat in distress by a special rescue squad. This was followed by an inspection of the Osanbashi International Passenger Terminal in Yokohama, where he observed operations being carried out at the CIQ (Customs, Immigration and Quarantine) Plaza. These included customs inspections of the personal effects of passengers entering and leaving the country, passport and visa inspections, and the quarantine of persons suspected of carrying infectious diseases as well as flora and fauna.

Prime Minister Koizumi emphasized the necessity of constantly being thoroughly prepared for any eventuality. "Despite the availability of state-of-the-art surveillance and other security technologies, we must always be aware of advances in technologies and other means to evade detection. This is why keeping security and safety precautions up to scratch is a very demanding business. We cannot predict when a terrorist attack or accident will occur. It is therefore imperative that we leave nothing to chance in our quest for maritime security and safety," he commented.

Preliminary Results of the Cool Biz Campaign

To cut greenhouse emissions, the Ministry of the Environment called for offices to set their air-conditioning at 28°C from June to September 2005, promoting the Cool Biz approach to summer attire for people to work in a cool and efficient manner. Following the campaign, the Ministry carried out a survey of 1,200 men and women on the Cool Biz initiative. As many as 95.8% of respondents stated that they were aware of the campaign and of the 562 workers surveyed, 32.7% replied that last summer their office air-conditioners were set at a higher level than in previous years. Calculations based on this figure reveal an approximate reduction of 460,000 tonnes in carbon dioxide emissions—the equivalent of the amount of carbon dioxide emitted in one month by approximately 1 million households. Hopes are high that during the winter period, the ministry's Warm Biz campaign will see offices set their thermostats lower and workers dress warmly and more suitably for the colder months.

Central America Exhibition

JETRO

The SICA (Sistema de Integración Centroamericana) Exhibition was held over four days from November 8 at the Tokyo JETRO Exhibition Hall. Last year saw the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Japanese diplomatic relations with five of the countries in Central America. To mark the anniversary, 2005 was designated the "Japan-Central America Year" and a range of commemorative events were scheduled, including the SICA Exhibition. A total of 65 companies and organizations from eight countries in the region participated, exhibiting foodstuffs, craft items and decorative plants, and conducting business discussions. There was also a corner set up in which videos and panel displays were used to introduce tourist attractions, and another for sampling foods and different types of coffee giving the event a genuine Central American flavor.

NEWS

Linking Asian Content

KYODO

The Asian Content Industry Seminar was held in Tokyo on October 27 and 28 to discuss establishing links among such content industries as movies, games and animation in the countries of Asia. The seminar included a ministerial-level meeting timed to coincide with the Tokyo International Film Festival and was attended by ministers and experts from the 10 ASEAN member states, plus those from China, the Republic of Korea, India and Japan. Cross-border distribution of Japanese and Asian movies and television programs has greatly expanded and is expected to do so in future. Participants reported on the current situation of the content industry in their respective countries, the challenges they face and the measures they are taking to deal with them. At the end of the seminar, a Ministerial Joint Statement was adopted suggesting courses of action. The major points of the Statement were the promotion of international collaboration; development and exchange of human resources; the expansion of the content market; the expansion of content trade, the investment environment and information sharing.

Asian Research Bases for Bird Flu

As avian influenza spreads throughout the East and Southeast Asia region, a number of Japanese universities have begun setting up research bases to combat the challenge. The overall aim of the research centers is to create a pool of researchers to conduct in-depth studies of the virus, the responses of national and local Asian governments to outbreaks, and to enhance their capabilities to rapidly and effectively respond in the event of an outbreak in Japan. The University of Osaka, Nagasaki University and the University of Tokyo have all established bases in Asia to carry out extensive research. The University of Osaka has set up a base in Thailand and, as well as researching the disease, it is striving to create a research network and foster the human resources necessary to prevent a pandemic. Researchers from Nagasaki University have based themselves in Vietnam to study the mechanism by which avian influenza infects humans. The University of Tokyo is collaborating with China's key research institute—the Chinese Academy of Sciences—to carry out joint research of actual cases of infection with the virus. All of these research activities are being coordinated by the Center of Research Network for Infectious Diseases set up within the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research.

World Cultural Forum 2005

AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Agency for Cultural Affairs held the World Cultural Forum 2005 for approximately two months from October 2005. Leading artists and cultural specialists from Japan and overseas gave lectures and held discussions in which they exchanged information on the world's latest cultural affairs and issues. The Forum also provided an important opportunity to promote Japanese culture to the outside world. Nine sessions were held under the main theme of Cultural Diversity. The topics of the four main sessions were Peace and Culture, Mythology and Culture, Art and Culture and Books and Culture. There was discussion of such topics as the role Japan can play in ethnic coexistence and harmony as well as the importance of promoting some of the special characteristics of Japan's culture. The focus of the Forum was very much on the Kansai region and prominent historical and modern architectural structures in the region were chosen as the venues for each of the sessions allowing the participants to gain a closer insight into Japanese culture.

NEWS

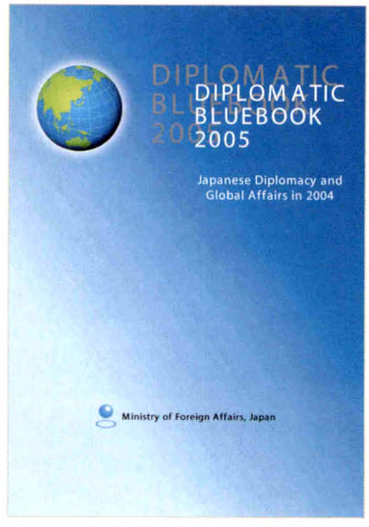
Japanese Wetlands Registered as Ramsar Sites

SUMIKO TAKEUCHI

On November 8, 20 wetlands in Japan, including the Akanko wetlands on the island of Hokkaido and the Oze wetlands *(photo)* in the Nikko National Park in the northern Kanto region, were added to the Ramsar Convention (formally known as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat) list of "wetlands of international importance." The registration took place on the opening day of the 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands held in the Ugandan capital of Kampala.

The Convention was originally adopted in February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar. Japan became a party to the Convention in October 1980, at which time the Kushiro wetlands on the island of Hokkaido were added to the list after having been judged to meet the eight international criteria. The contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention meet every three years with Kushiro serving as the venue in 1993. The addition of 20 new Ramsar sites takes Japan's registered total to 33, with a total wetland area of 130,293 hectares.

Diplomatic Bluebook 2005



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan recently published the Diplomatic Bluebook 2005. The Bluebook serves as an English medium to provide foreign countries with both a comprehensive and detailed view of Japan's foreign policy. It opens by explaining Japanese diplomacy in the context of the current international situation and summarizes Japan's diplomatic activities in 2004. Five main points are put forward—the strengthening of the foundation of national security, reform of the United Nations, strengthening cooperation with the countries of the East Asian region, efforts to ensure the peace and stability of the Middle Eastern region, and providing assistance including natural disaster relief. It also focuses on Japanese people and organizations active in the international arena, from individual citizens and corporations to international organizations and NGOs, as well as explaining the foreign aid offered by the Japanese government. The Bluebook also features articles by people who have made a name for themselves overseas and explains how, when looked at in the broader sense, many things qualify as diplomatic activities. The 2005 Bluebook has been compiled with the reader in mind, with more charts and photographs than in previous years and expanded use of explanatory notes.

KOIZUMI CABINET *e-mail magazine*

The weekly Koizumi Cabinet E-mail Magazine is available free of charge in English to subscribers. Each issue contains a message from Prime Minister Koizumi and other information about the government.

FOR SUBSCRIPTION INFO ➤

http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/m-magazine/index.html

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS:

➤ *November 10*

Prime Minister Koizumi stated that his newly appointed Chief Cabinet Secretary and ministers have begun work and are holding serious discussions toward various reform measures. Notable reforms include the three pressing issues of subsidy, tax sources and local allocation tax. Also on the agenda are a review of government-related financial organizations, review of tax revenues for road projects and reform of the medical insurance system.

➤ *November 17*

Prime Minister Koizumi began this week's message by congratulating Princess Sayoko and her new husband on the occasion of their recent marriage. He continued by noting his recent summit meeting with US President Bush, which provided the opportunity to exchange thoughts on such issues as terrorism, North Korea, the situation in Iraq and US military bases in Japan from the perspective of the "Japan-US alliance in the global context."

➤ *November 24*

The Prime Minister attended the recent APEC Meeting. Discussions included liberalization of trade and investment, energy issues, counterterrorism measures and the spread of avian influenza. On November 21, Koizumi met with President Putin of Russia. He stated that despite some disagreements, the two leaders share the view that they should continue serious discussions and boost bilateral consultations at various levels of government.

Perfect Temperatures

Japan's reform-minded Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has taken the lead in a new fashion campaign that seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Japanese people are widely known for their keen fashion sense, and a new government initiative has capitalized on this to introduce a far-reaching environmental reform. Last summer, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi took the lead in doing away with stuffy neckties and began attending Diet sessions and other meetings wearing cool, open-neck shirts. Known as "Cool Biz," this casual dress program aimed at reducing air conditioning to help reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

Following on from the success of Cool Biz, this winter the government has launched a complimentary reform known as "Warm Biz." This new campaign seeks to encourage people to wear an extra layer of clothing during the colder winter months to reduce the need for excessive heating in offices and other places of work.

"Our Cool Biz campaign was popular with the public last summer and we expect similar results from our Warm Biz program. Our campaigns are geared toward saving energy, and at the same time raising public awareness on the dangers of global warming and the role that can be played by the ordinary person to protect the environment. These goals are now well within reach thanks to the new fashion campaigns," explains Yoshihisa Fujita, a section chief at the Ministry of the Environment.

Dressing according to the seasonal temperatures is a simple yet brilliant idea according to experts who are battling to reduce increasing greenhouse gases in Japan to meet the targets set in the Kyoto Protocol international treaty in 1997. Under the Kyoto stipulations Japan must reduce its average annual greenhouse gas emissions by 6% in the period 2008-2012 from levels measured in 1990. The targets are daunting for the government, which is promoting various measures to address the situation.

"Targeting the consumer is important in reducing polluting gases, which is why we hit on the idea of clothing trends," says Fujita. While it is too early to estimate actual reduction figures for greenhouse gases that have been achieved by the Cool Biz campaign, the Ministry of the Environment projects that between 1.6 to 2.9 million fewer tonnes of carbon dioxide would be emitted if all offices in Japan set their air conditioners to 28°C instead of the summer average of 26.2°C, and in winter adjusted heating temperatures to 20°C rather than the 25°C average.

"Setting temperatures to 20°C during the winter can be a little too cold for some people, so we are also recommending that people take more exercise and hot drinks as these steps can all add to keeping them warmer," says Fujita.

While greenhouse gas reduction figures may be unavailable, tangible economic results have been realized. Clothing stores – an important contributor to the Japanese economy – have reported brisk business as a result of the new dress campaigns. The Japan Department Stores Association reported sales of men's clothing and accessories edged up 2.6% from June to August compared to the same period of the previous year. Sales of collarless shirts, buttoned collar shirts and other shirts that do not require ties rose by 25%. To make up for the chagrin of necktie producers who reported downward sales, officials predict a winter rush to buy these accessories as well as new sweaters and coats as people look for warmer clothing to save energy.

Most of all, though, says the Ministry of the Environment, the campaigns have raised public awareness of the pressing need to do something to reduce global warming. And there is data to prove it; 80% of people surveyed in Cool Biz polls replied that the campaign had made them more aware of the need to save energy. This new environmental consciousness, say officials, is expected to translate into more people buying energy-efficient household appliances and adapting their lifestyles accordingly.

The Ministry of the Environment is now planning a campaign for the summer of 2006 that will include the launch of cooler materials for clothing to reduce the use of air conditioners in offices and bring about cleaner air for the benefit of all.

Text by **SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI**, a freelance journalist from Sri Lanka based in Tokyo

Wang Min

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **KAZUKO KIMIZUKA**

The future of Asia could hinge upon the political power of China and the economic power of Japan. Wang Min, a leading Chinese scholar, discusses how the two countries could build their relationship.

A series of anti-Japanese demonstrations in China made headline news in Japan last year, which also saw the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII. Are anti-Japanese sentiments still escalating in China?

When viewed from Japan, one may have got the impression from the demonstrations last April that the whole of China was anti-Japanese. However, when we look out across the vastness of China, it is apparent that this was not the case at all. Although there were violent demonstrations in Beijing and Shanghai, these appear to have been fairly isolated incidents.

There had been fears that the anniversaries of the May 4th Movement and of victory against Japan in WWII would spark anti-Japanese protests, but these did not materialize. It is probable that the Chinese government acted positively to prevent such movements, but I think that in the background there is a growing awareness among Chinese people that international relations are a very sensitive issue.

Accompanying the growing awareness in China of the importance of developing in a globalizing world, a new concept vis-a-vis international relations seems to be taking hold. This can probably be translated into English as 'going with the flow' and refers to the need for a shared perspective with the rest of the world. The core of the generation that favors this concept of 'going with the flow' is made up of those born after the 1980s, a period that saw China move to adopt a policy of reform and opening up to the world, and who also are using the internet and communications freely. This generation was taught at school about the history of Sino-Japanese conflict, and yet it has grown up surrounded by products which were "made in Japan." Imports of these Japanese-made products had accelerated in the 1980s following the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and Japan in 1972. Thus, this generation, which mixes anti-Japanese and pro-Japanese sentiments, has displayed a liking for Japanese products, such as animations, from a young age.

Looking at the news reports from China, it seems that the anti-Japanese sentiments have been emphasized, while any pro-Japanese thinking has been hard to find. What is the reality?

I have had many opportunities to visit Chinese universities and listen directly to the students. My feeling is that they were brought up with an interest in Japan and were stimulated by cultural factors like Japanese animation, popular TV dramas or Japanese pop music. The younger generation in China knows that the modernization of Japan after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 provided a model for present-day China.

Many of the young people who took part in the anti-Japanese demonstrations harbor dual feelings toward Japan, and their sensitive reaction toward historical issues, such as the controversial visits to Yasukuni Shrine, and the contents of Japanese history textbooks, comes from the question "why is Japan like that?" Many of them feel like they are somehow being betrayed by a close friend and this further stimulates their feelings of anger. A kind of "love-hate" relationship would be one way of putting it.

How much Japanese culture actually reaches young Chinese people?

There is a lot of information that relates to Japan permeating everyday life in China, and I have paid particular attention to the vast amount of information about Japan that is available from books. Larger bookstores generally have a permanent section relating to Japan, but what is particularly surprising is that there is a large amount of space devoted to Japanese literature. In this field, the works of Haruki Murakami have been enjoying overwhelming popularity.

The first work of Murakami's to become popular in China was his *Norwegian Wood*, which was published in 1989 and has sold over 1.5 million copies in many editions. This was an epoch-making book in literature in China, where novels usually deal with such themes as history and politics. I understand that more than three million copies of Murakami's works have now been translated, published and sold. A complete collection of Murakami's works has been published, and the boom in his writings continues today.

Why is it that Haruki Murakami enjoys such popularity in China?

I am sure that the background to the Murakami boom is to be found in the large structural changes Chinese society has undergone. After China began its process of reform and opening to the outside world, it pursued the Japanese model and the market economy made progress. The ratio of population between the cities and the villages changed rapidly. The concentration of the population in the cities has seen large scale investment in the private sector and a huge increase in those employed in the service sector. By 1997, the peasant and farming population accounted for less than half of the nation for the first time ever.

WANG MIN was born in China's Hebei Province and graduated from the Sichuan Institute of Foreign Languages. She gained her doctorate from Ochanomizu University before becoming Associate Professor at Tokyo Seitoku University. At present, she is Professor at the Center for International Studies at Hosei University. She specializes in Sino-Japan comparative studies and in Kenji Miyazawa studies. She has published many books in Japanese on the comparative cultures of China and Japan, and has been a leading promoter of Kenji Miyazawa in China.

"It is important for both countries to return to basics, and

In particular, since the 1990s, there has been a sudden expansion of the middle class. This, in turn, has given rise to small-scale investors, or a petit-bourgeois class, and a liberal smattering of nouveau rich. The speech by Chairman Jiang Zemin published on the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party on July 1, 2001, made it possible for private businesspeople to become members of the communist party. This meant that individually wealthy people and private investors, instead of being regarded as anti-revolutionary, as had historically been the case, could now be seen as investors in the future of China, and thought of as refined city dwellers. In this new era, Murakami became fashionable as the idea of "urbanism" began to change, and students and the new petit-bourgeois investor class became ardent admirers.

It has been said that Murakami's works are popular in Russia, which has also experienced great societal upheaval in recent times. But what are younger Chinese trying to find in his novels in this period of change in China?

In the big cities of the coastal regions there has been a move away from a centralized value system toward one based on relative values and a western-style sense of self. However, this new emphasis on individuality is not yet at a mature stage in China, and young people are desperately seeking an individuality that relates to the international community in the 21st century. Many feel that the literature of Murakami can help in this search.

In his work, we find characters who coolly enjoy their own individuality, and view the social system and the community with a sense of detachment and distance. Chinese youth can relate to the views and philosophies that Murakami's characters embody, and they may be able to contemplate how to achieve stability of mind in their own personal world and gain a sense of reassurance, as Murakami deals with the loneliness and emptiness of modern society with which they can identify.

Apart from literature, are there other factors we should look at?

Liking Japan is a common phenomenon among the younger generation in China. Increasing numbers of shops that deal in Japanese products gather together in areas that have come to be known as "Japanese castles," and these centers have come into the big cities with their target market being the younger generation. Also, the street fashions of Shibuya and Harajuku are introduced to places like Shanghai without any time lag. The same is true of J-pop CDs, which go on sale at the same time as in Japan, and *manga* and female fashion magazines are translated into Chinese and are on sale in bookstores within days of their appearance in Japan.

I think that the key concept to examine when explaining the welcoming of Japanese culture by the younger generation is that of "composite culture." It is easier to understand the present situation in China as representing a mixed, or composite, culture, which merges China's distinctive culture with cultural influences from overseas. Economic growth was accelerated by the arrival of foreign companies in China, and this created a space in which the Chinese could sense a different culture. These companies entered special economic zones rapidly, and began to create a borderless cultural space which started to make city life more attractive.

This borderless space in Chinese society now functions as an exhibition of foreign cultures and global affairs, and is also acting as a training school for global views, which absorb people's curiosity and draws them like a magnet. Japan was the country that led the way in the opening up of this type of space, and I think that Japanese food, domestic electrical appliances, trendy TV dramas, animations and pop music acted as the forerunner in this movement. For the generation in China that has experienced reform and opening to the world, the feeling that a mixed culture equals Japanese culture is strong. This generation has also learnt about western culture through its contact with Japan, and this has engendered an interest in American culture. China's embracing of Japanese culture has been a large factor in it overcoming any feelings of superiority toward other Asian cultures, and China is now experiencing a Korean boom as well.

China has experienced strong waves of globalization, hasn't it? Now, despite the outer layer of people's consciousness being interested in a mixed culture, isn't the central core of traditional Chinese culture still solid at a deeper level? I wonder, whether the younger generation is troubled by the apparent gap between these levels of culture?

The generations born before the reforms were not troubled with internal conflict about one's sense of values as are the younger people of today. Preceding generations avoided Japanese and western values as though they were a type of poisonous herb, and were united in their anti-Japanese stance. But, these values underwent a 180-degree turn after reform and opening to the world, and I feel that this change has an importance no less significant than Japan's own Meiji Restoration.

I think that the dual view that I mentioned earlier, which encompasses both pro-Japanese and anti-Japanese sentiments, will be a very important theme in relations between China and Japan in the future. The formation of this dual view is still an ongoing process, and it can only be said to be a noticeable phenomenon among the younger generation. However, this dual view, although containing positive sentiment toward Japan, is not seeing a lessening of negative views. That side of the phenomenon contains the danger of incidents such as the anti-Japanese demonstrations of last year exploding from some relatively small incident.

What can be done to ease those tensions in the future?

It is important to recognize that many young people today may be experiencing an identity crisis. It is therefore crucial that they become more aware of their traditional Chinese roots.

The core of the Chinese identity is based upon Confucianism. This places great emphasis on history, and this history is the embodiment of the Confucian spirit. Chinese history books have been based on the Confucian spirit since ancient times, and history

o begin to understand what is different about each other."

shows how culture and the way of life should be. The conscientious study of historical events, the links between the individual and society seen through those historical events, and the study of responsibility through that historical knowledge is the basic premise of social interaction in China. This is why the everyday life of people in China even today is encapsulated in sayings and proverbs handed down from history.

The handing down of history to succeeding generations is also a source of great pride in China. The very painful experience of the war with Japan in particular is one that is thought to be important for each generation to be aware of. This is to ensure that such a situation is never allowed to develop again, and it is thought of as quite natural in China for such historical instruction to be handed down from generation to generation.

When viewed from this perspective, it perplexes Chinese people when they see the same historical mistakes being made over and over. To Chinese eyes, it seems that there is something fundamentally lacking in the way history is taught in Japan. This can cause bad feeling, which in turn can escalate into distrust, and I think that this creates a perception gap between the two sides.

What is required to overcome the problems that arise from different perceptions of history?

It seems to me that the Chinese look at different eras along a vertical axis, whereas the Japanese persistently try to grasp eras in a horizontal manner. This latter approach tries to understand what is happening in the same timescale, and suggests that the present matters more than the past. This would, for example, allow for the achievement of economic development, without being concerned or hindered by what may have happened in the past. I would like to see a vertical recognition of history added to this horizontal concept, in order that Japan can successfully manage its relationships with China and other countries in the Asian region.

In particular, the Japanese failure to properly teach modern history can cause difficulties with neighboring countries, or so it seems to me. School education in Japan in modern history generally finishes with the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taisho (1912–1926) periods. There is hardly any detail provided on the Showa era (1926–1989). This may have something to do with the need for manageable school and university entrance examinations, but whatever the reason this period of modern history is hardly ever touched upon in Japanese classrooms.

In contrast, the teaching of modern history in China, which commences with the revolution of 1911 that brought an end to the monarchical form of government, is viewed as vitally important. In addition, 1921 marks the year in which the Chinese Communist Party was founded, and this also merits great importance. Much emphasis goes into describing how socialist China was built through the period of war with Japan, and of civil war with the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Army. Given the importance of modern history in China, it is quite natural that the history of conflict between China and Japan should feature strongly in the curriculum. However, what I would like to emphasize here is that history education in China is by no means aimed at creating anti-Japanese sentiment. Its purpose has been to teach patriotism, along with anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist sentiments.

As a result of these different perspectives, huge gaps exist between the younger generations of China and Japan in relation to ideas about modern history. If this is not addressed, then this gap may only widen. I would like to see China control the excesses of patriotism or nationalism, and for Japan to teach more modern history and teach it more completely.

Finally, how do you see the future development of Sino-Japan relations?

It is important for both countries to return to basics, and to begin to understand what is different about each other. Both countries use Chinese ideographic characters, and because of this similarity there are many things that appear on the surface to be understood, but in fact are not.

Ever since the visit of Japanese envoys to China during the Sui (AD 581–618) and Tang (AD 618–907) periods both countries have emphasized the common points in their cultures and have tried to overlook the differences. I think that throughout history both countries have unconsciously avoided the difficulties that come with trying to understand the cultural differences between the two countries. However, those differences have started to surface in the 21st century.

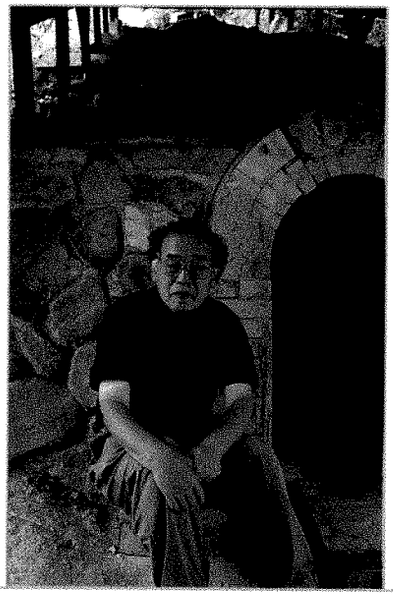
Thinking positively, I feel that the key to solving the difficulties between China and Japan will be found by recognizing the "tragedy of their shared racial features and common script." Just as plants need to grow strong roots in good soil, and to have effective fertilization in order to flower and bloom, so it is with China and Japan. They need to recognize the differences in each other's cultures, this being the equivalent of the roots of the plant, for their relationship to be able to flower and bloom.

— INTERVIEW BY HISASHI KONDO

TRADITIONAL ART

BIZEN CERAMICS

TEXT BY MASANAO SASAKI *SENIOR SPECIALIST, AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS* PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROSHI OHASHI



▲ Jun Isezaki in front of a climbing kiln. Bizen ceramics are fired in kilns at temperatures exceeding 1,200°C for over ten days.

"BIZEN CERAMICS DO NOT USE GLAZES, BUT EVEN SO, EACH PIECE IS VIBRANT WITH COLOR. I FIND A STRONG, HUMAN WARMTH IN THE POTTERY OF BIZEN."

Many histories of the Japanese ceramic tradition speak of the "six ancient kilns." This categorization, which refers to six major Japanese ceramic production centers that flourished during the Kamakura (1185–1333) and Muromachi (1338–1573) periods, was proposed by the internationally-oriented ceramics scholar Fujio Koyama (1900–1975) in the late 1950s. In the years since then, at various sites around Japan, archeologists have uncovered a number of other once-thriving pottery centers. As a result, the term "six ancient kilns" has fallen somewhat into disuse. But the fact remains that these "six ancient kilns"—which have continuously produced ceramics from medieval times through to the present day—have played an important role in Japan's ceramic heritage. Bizen is one of the historical six areas, and even today there are more than 400 potters who specialize in the production of Bizen ware. Accordingly, Bizen pottery is one of the best known styles of Japanese ceramics.

Bizen pottery follows a tradition carefully handed down from master to apprentice through more than 800 years. The Bizen methods developed in an area centered around the Imbe district of what is now Bizen City, Okayama Prefecture, toward the end of the 12th century. Bizen pottery does not use glazes. Rather, it is an unglazed ceramic fired for periods of 10 days or more at temperatures exceeding 1,200°C. Ever since the end of the Muromachi period, Bizen pottery has also been characterized by the use of a particular type of clay. The base for the clay is called *hiyose*, a locally-dug *tatsuchi* (paddy clay) rich in iron and containing a high level of plasticity.

During its medieval heyday, the Bizen area mainly produced everyday utensils such as jugs, storage pots and mortars for grinding food. With the development of the tea ceremony during the Momoyama period (ca.1573–1603), however, Bizen potters expanded the style's repertoire. They crafted bold yet refined masterworks of water jars, flower vases and other elements used in the tea ceremony. Bizen artists also made tableware for use in the formal *kaiseki* meals that accompanied the tea ceremony, and Bizen established a reputation as a center for ceremonial tea ware. The history of Bizen ceramics has not been entirely smooth, of course. There were occasions during the Edo period (1603–1867) and into the later Meiji (1868–1912) and Taisho (1912–1926) periods, when it seemed that the art might die out. But at the beginning of the Showa period (1926–1989), an artist named Toyo Kaneshige (1896–1967) revived the *Ko-Bizen*, or classical Bizen, methods of the Momoyama period. He based his artistic approach to ceramics around the classical techniques. Other potters followed his example, with the result that Kaneshige's approach became the mainstream of modern Bizen ware.

Today's Bizen ware blends the richness of the clay body used to make each piece with the serendipitous markings that occur during firing. Ash drifts onto the pieces and flames may lick at their surfaces, causing streaks and flares of color. At the same time, makers of Bizen ware today incorporate a modern sensibility into their work, and modern Bizen ceramics are highly regarded for their artistic emphasis.

BIZEN VESSEL WITH LINEAR DESIGN *2004, Jun Isezaki* ➤

This vessel is produced with a rough type of clay containing a low degree of viscosity. Depending on the condition of the kiln, the finished surface may contain a rich variety of expression. The surface clay of this vessel contains small, raised stone-like dots, and the linear surface design appears as if made by a space exploration vehicle.

Bizen ware, in fact, is especially highly valued for its artistic qualities. Its prominent place in the Japanese handicraft heritage was recognized in 1956, when Bizen ceramics were designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property, and Toyo Kaneshige was designated the inaugural Holder of this Property. Later holders of this Property were Kei Fujiwara (1899–1983), Toshu Yamamoto (1906–1994), and Yu Fujiwara (1932–2001). The title of Holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property of Bizen ceramics was bestowed on the current holder, Jun Isezaki, in 2004.

Jun Isezaki was born in 1936, in the Imbe district of Bizen Town, Okayama Prefecture. He was the second son of a well-known master of Bizen ornamental figures, Yozan Isezaki (1902–1961). After graduating from the fine arts program of the Faculty of Education at Okayama University in 1959, Isezaki began an apprenticeship under his father. There, he refined his skills in traditional Bizen ware through diligent practice and research of both technique and expression.

In 1961, Isezaki formed a partnership with his older brother, Mitsuru. Their initial production was fired in an experimental replica of a historical *anagama*, or cave-like kiln. In the ensuing years, Isezaki has continued his studies of traditional styles and methods, investigating all aspects from clay selection to the structure, packing and firing of his kilns. The sure knowledge and technique gained through his years of experience provide a firm foundation that Isezaki combines with great imagination to form his own, original approach to Bizen ware.

Ever since his days as a university student, Isezaki has had a great interest in the developments of modern art around the world. He has been inspired by the works of such artists as Spanish architect Antonio Gaudí (1852–1926) and Spanish painter and printmaker Joan Miró (1893–1983) to try his hand at decorative objets d'art. His collaborative associations have also crossed genre lines, including those with sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) and printmaker Masuo Ikeda (1934–1997).

Isezaki's expressive vision has spanned a broad range of areas, from traditional tea utensils to radically innovative sculpture and ceramic murals, and in turn, has greatly influenced younger artists. He continues to play an active leadership role in shaping the development of modern Bizen ware. Incidentally, the ceramic mural decorating the lobby of the Japanese Prime Minister's new official residence, completed in 2002, is a work by Isezaki.

Isezaki, who is lauded as an innovator of Bizen ware, shares what he finds fascinating about the style, "Bizen ceramics do not use glazes, but even so, each piece is vibrant with color. I find a strong, human warmth in the pottery of Bizen." He adds, "True tradition is formed by the continuous layering of new creations. I want to take in and absorb the times and environment I live in, and create new forms with a modern sensibility."

Isezaki has worked hard to foster the development of younger artists. Starting in 1978, he worked for about 10 years as an adjunct instructor in the fine arts program at Okayama University, his alma mater. Many potters, including the rising star of Bizen ware, Ryuichi Kakurezaki (1950–), have served apprenticeships under the esteemed Isezaki.

▲ **BIZEN MIZUSASHI WATER JAR WITH HIDASUKI SCARLET STREAKS**
Momoyama period (16th century)
Collection of the Hatakeyama Memorial Museum of Fine Art

This pail-shaped Bizen water jar is considered a masterpiece of the *hidasuki* type of Bizen ceramics. The wide mouth of the jar is gently ovate. The deep red hidasuki streaks merge and twist in a variety of patterns, blurring together near the jar's rim.

Hidasuki (meaning "scarlet ribbon") markings are the result of a reaction that occurs during firing in the kiln. When the kiln is loaded, individual pieces are wrapped in straw to prevent them from fusing together. The straw burns away during firing, and the alkaline component of the straw reacts with iron in the clay to form the scarlet markings. When Bizen clay is fired in a steam kiln, where flames do not actually touch the pieces, the end color of exposed clay is an off-white, while clay that was covered by straw is a deep red.

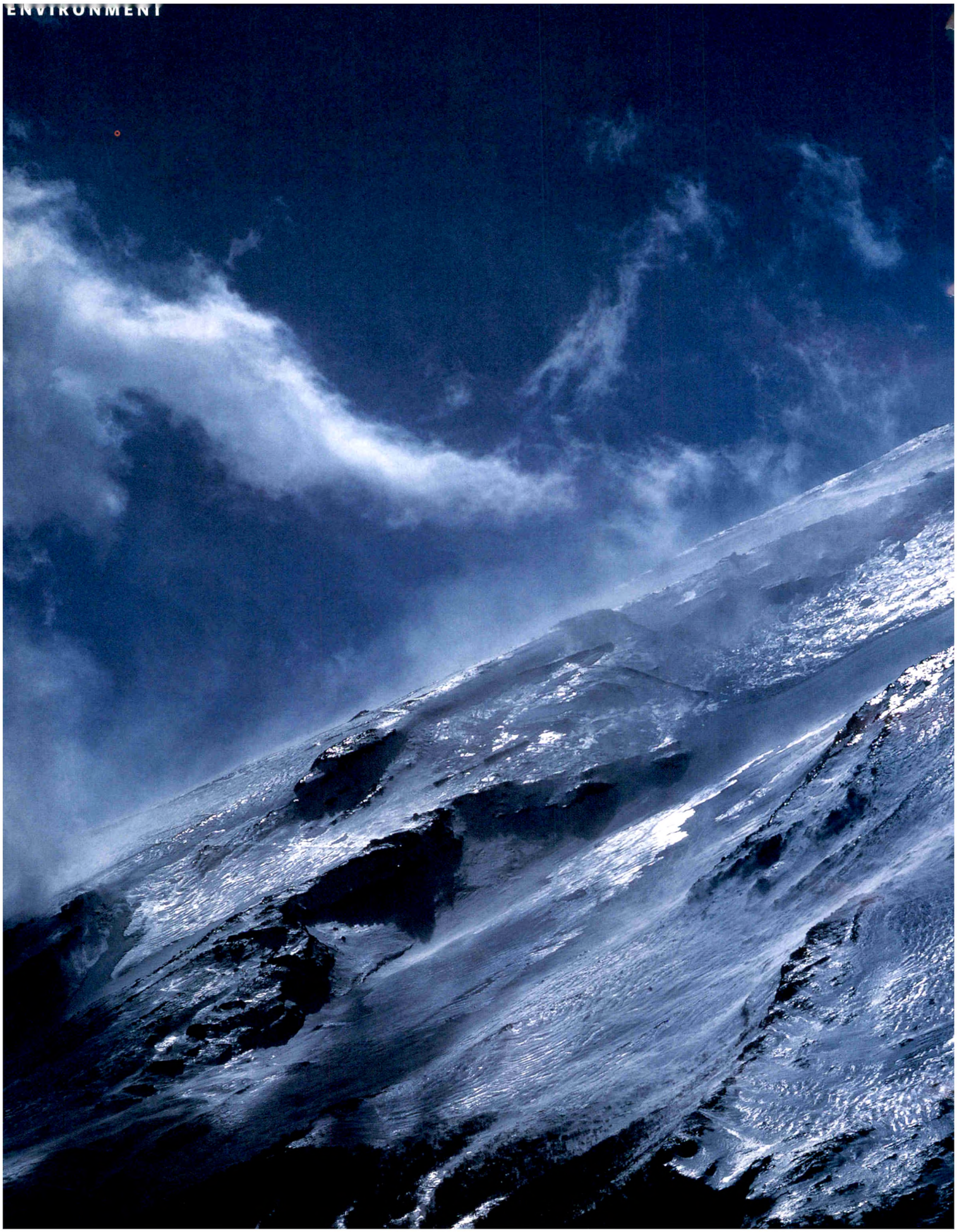
▲ **BIZEN KINUTA VASE**
Toyo Kaneshige (1960); Collection of the Ibaraki Ceramic Art Museum

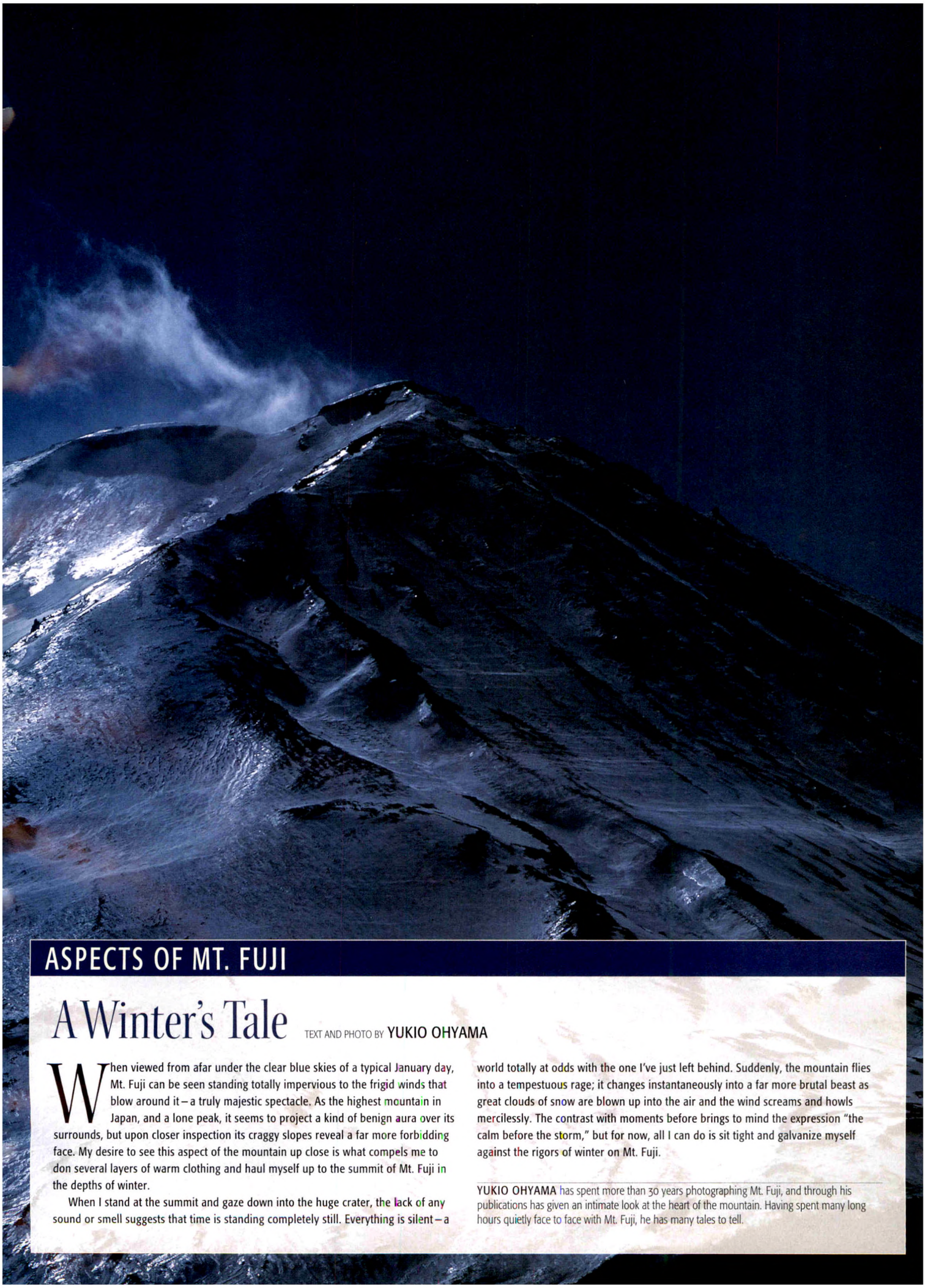
Its shape described with the Japanese word for the heavy wooden blocks once used to pound laundry–*kinuta*, this vase has a long, narrow neck extending from the straight, sharply defined shoulders of a thick body. Lines incised around the body and upper portion seem to draw the vase together. The brilliant scarlet of the body contrasts energetically with the deep ash-darkened neck and shoulders of the vase.

Toyo Kaneshige (1896–1967) single-handedly built the foundation for the postwar renaissance of Bizen ceramics, and is generally credited with having resurrected the art form. His work with Bizen ware was recognized in 1956, when he was the first person to be designated Holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property of Bizen ceramics.

◀ **LARGE BLACK BIZEN OBACHI POT** *2003, Jun Isezaki*

The clay used for this piece exudes a somewhat elegant simplicity. Straw was placed randomly in the pot before firing resulting in a decidedly abstract and modern design. At the same time, however, this thought-provoking work is also reminiscent of the type of utensils used by people in ancient times.





ASPECTS OF MT. FUJI

A Winter's Tale

TEXT AND PHOTO BY **YUKIO OHYAMA**

When viewed from afar under the clear blue skies of a typical January day, Mt. Fuji can be seen standing totally impervious to the frigid winds that blow around it – a truly majestic spectacle. As the highest mountain in Japan, and a lone peak, it seems to project a kind of benign aura over its surrounds, but upon closer inspection its craggy slopes reveal a far more forbidding face. My desire to see this aspect of the mountain up close is what compels me to don several layers of warm clothing and haul myself up to the summit of Mt. Fuji in the depths of winter.

When I stand at the summit and gaze down into the huge crater, the lack of any sound or smell suggests that time is standing completely still. Everything is silent – a world totally at odds with the one I've just left behind. Suddenly, the mountain flies into a tempestuous rage; it changes instantaneously into a far more brutal beast as great clouds of snow are blown up into the air and the wind screams and howls mercilessly. The contrast with moments before brings to mind the expression "the calm before the storm," but for now, all I can do is sit tight and galvanize myself against the rigors of winter on Mt. Fuji.

YUKIO OHYAMA has spent more than 30 years photographing Mt. Fuji, and through his publications has given an intimate look at the heart of the mountain. Having spent many long hours quietly face to face with Mt. Fuji, he has many tales to tell.

APP: Japan+ Questionnaire

Thank you very much for reading *Asia-Pacific Perspectives: Japan+ (APP: Japan+)*! Our publication aims to provide readers with information to aid general understanding of a wide range of subjects related to Japan, including politics, economics, culture and society. Each year we include a questionnaire to help us produce a magazine geared toward the interests of our readers. Please help us by completing this questionnaire to let us know whether *APP: Japan+* has been useful to you. We hope to use the results to bring you a better, more informative magazine.

Please complete the answer postcard, or circle the appropriate answer(s) on page 48, and return to us by December 31, 2006, in one of the following ways:

By post:
Simply mail the attached answer postcard to the address on the front–**NO STAMP REQUIRED**. We have included four answer postcards to give as many readers as possible the chance to reply (one postcard per person, please).

By fax:
+81-3-5571-8890

Over the Internet:
www.jijigaho.or.jp

We will send a small present to 50 names drawn at random from the completed questionnaires. Please include your name and address if you wish to be entered into the prize draw.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

❑ Mr.
❑ Ms.

Name* **Name and address optional.*

Address*

Postcode **Country**

Age: **A** Under 20 **B** 20–29 **C** 30–39 **D** 40–49 **E** 50–59 **F** 60–69 **G** 70 or over

Occupation: **A** Company employee **B** Company manager **C** Researcher **D** Teacher **E** Diplomat **F** Civil servant **G** Member of an international organization **H** Member of an NGO **I** Doctor/medic **J** Lawyer **K** Accountant **L** Journalist **M** Self-employed **N** Artist **O** Homemaker **P** Student **Q** No occupation **R** Other (_____)

Q1 How did you first come across *APP: Japan+*?
A Saw it in a library **B** Saw it at an embassy **C** Saw it at a United Nations-related organization **D** Someone told me about it **E** Saw it in a store **F** Saw it on the Internet **G** Other

Q2 Why did you read *APP: Japan+*?
A I'm interested in Japan **B** I was attracted by the cover **C** I was interested in the articles **D** I was attracted by the photographs **E** Other

Q3 What did you think of the articles in this month's issue?

	Good	Neither good nor bad	Bad		Good	Neither good nor bad	Bad
A. Fashion	1	2	3	H. Beauty	1	2	3
B. History	1	2	3	I. Lifestyle	1	2	3
C. The Rise of Robots	1	2	3	J. Government	1	2	3
D. Diplomacy	1	2	3	K. Structural Reforms	1	2	3
E. Prime Minister	1	2	3	L. Interview	1	2	3
F. APEC Summit	1	2	3	M. Traditional Art	1	2	3
G. Science	1	2	3	N. Environment	1	2	3

Q4 Has *APP: Japan+* increased your understanding of modern-day Japan?
A Yes, very much **B** Yes, a little **C** No, not much **D** Don't know

Q5 If you replied YES **to Q4, how do you think you have benefited from *APP: Japan+*?** *(check all that apply)*
A I have learnt about policies I would like to see in my country **B** I have learnt more about global problems **C** I have found issues that Japan and my country have in common **D** It has helped me in my field of research **E** It has given me hints on how to succeed in business in Japan **F** Other

Q6 Has *APP: Japan+* shown you the contribution Japan makes to other countries?
A Yes **B** No **C** Don't know

Q7 Has reading *APP: Japan+* made you want to visit Japan?
A Yes, as a tourist **B** Yes, I would like to study in Japan **C** Yes, I would like to work in Japan **D** No, I don't particularly want to visit Japan

Q8 Has reading *APP: Japan+* given you a more positive impression of Japan?
A Yes, I have gained a more positive image of Japan **B** No, I have gained a more negative image of Japan **C** Same as before

Q9 If you replied YES **to Q8, in what ways have you gained a more positive image of Japan?** *(check all that appl*
A I have gained a better understanding of contemporary Japanese culture (anime, film, fashion, etc.) **B** I have gained a better understanding of traditional Japanese culture **C** I have gained a better understanding of Japanese technology **D** I have enjoyed the articles about the activities of various Japanese people **E** Other

Q10 What sort of topics would you like to see in the Special Feature in the future? *(check all that apply)*
A Environmental issues **B** Science & technology **C** Medicine & welfare **D** Education **E** Japan's international contributions **F** Contemporary Japanese culture **G** Traditional Japanese culture **H** Japanese people active around the world **I** Global problems **J** Other

Q11 What do you think of the photos and the design of *APP: Japan+*?
A Very Good **B** Good **C** Neither good nor bad **D** Not good **E** Don't know

Q12 From what sources do you mainly receive information about Japan? *(check all that apply)*
A *APP: Japan+* **B** Other magazines **C** Newspapers **D** Television **E** Internet **F** Other

* Please note that all personal information provided on this questionnaire will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will not be informed to any third party whatsoev
If there is any change in the information relating to the delivery of our publication, please inform us at your earliest convenience.

TOKYO BIG SIGHT EVENT SCHEDULE JANUARY 2006—MARCH 2006

1/6 (Fri) *Public Free*
New Year's Fire Review 2006
Tokyo Fire Department, Administration Division, Administration Section
Tel: 03-3212-2111 Fax: 03-3213-6094

1/7 (Sat) – 1/9 (Mon) *Public ¥1000*
ANTIQUE JAMBOREE
ANTIQUE JAMBOREE
Tel: 03-5996-4105 Fax: 03-5996-4130

1/8 (Sun) *Public ¥1000*
AMUSING COLLECTION FLEA MARKET & COS-DAY
Takarajima Collection Market Office
Tel: 03-3843-1290 Fax: 03-3843-2400

1/18 (Wed) – 1/20 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
35th INTERNEPCON JAPAN
INTERNEPCON JAPAN Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

1/18 (Wed) – 1/20 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
23rd ELECTROTEST JAPAN
ELECTROTEST JAPAN Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

1/18 (Wed) – 1/20 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
7th IC Packaging Technology Expo (ICP)
IC Packaging Technology Expo Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

1/18 (Wed) – 1/20 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
7th Printed Wiring Boards Expo (PWB EXPO)
Printed Wiring Boards Expo Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

1/18 (Wed) – 1/20 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
7th INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS TRADE SHOW (ELE TRADE)
INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS TRADE SHOW Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

1/18 (Wed) – 1/20 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
6th Fiber Optics Expo (FOE)
Fiber Optics Expo Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

1/25 (Wed) – 1/27 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
2nd INTERNATIONAL HYDROGEN & FUEL CELL EXPO (FC EXPO2006)
INTERNATIONAL HYDROGEN & FUEL CELL EXPO Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

1/25 (Wed) – 1/28 (Sat) *Trade*
17th International Jewellery Tokyo 2006
INTERNATIONAL JEWELLERY TOKYO
Tel: 03-3349-8503 Fax: 03-3344-2400

1/29 (Sun) *Public*
COMIC CITY TOKYO 112
Akaboo
Tel: 03-3225-8520

2/1 (Wed) – 2/3 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥2000*
NET & COM 2006
Nikkei BP NET & COM management office
Tel: 03-5210-7001 Fax: 03-5210-7014

2/1 (Wed) – 2/3 (Fri) *Trade/Public Free*
30TH ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT EXHIBITION
ENEX Operation Office
Tel: 03-5543-3013 Fax: 03-5543-3887

2/3 (Fri) – 2/5 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
DIVING FESTIVAL 2006
The Secretariat of the Diving Festival
Tel: 03-3503-7623 Fax: 03-3503-7620

2/7 (Tue) – 2/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public Free*
HEATING, VENTILATING, AIR-CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATING EXPO.
Secretariat of HVAC&R JAPAN
Tel: 03-3219-3562 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/7 (Thu) – 2/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public Free*
Materials/Equipment for Air-Conditioning and Sanitary Exhibition
MACS OFFICE
Tel: 03-3503-7611 Fax: 03-3503-7620

2/14 (Tue) – 2/17 (Fri) *Trade Free*
THE 61st Tokyo INTERNATIONAL GIFT SHOW spring 2006
BUSINESS GUIDE-SHA, INC.
Tel: 03-3843-9851 Fax: 03-3843-9850

2/21 (Tue) – 2/23 (Thu) *Trade/Public ¥3000*
nano tech 2006 International Nanotechnology Exhibition & Conference
Secretariat Office c/o ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3567 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/21 (Tue) – 2/23 (Thu) *Trade/Public ¥3000*
Nano Bio Expo 2006
Secretariat Office c/o ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3564 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/21 (Tue) – 2/23 (Thu) *Trade/Public ¥3000*
neo functional material 2006
Secretariat Office c/o ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3561 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/21 (Tue) – 2/23 (Thu) *Trade/Public ¥3000*
ASTEC 2006
Secretariat Office c/o ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3564 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/24 (Fri) – 2/26 (Sun) *Trade/Public Free*
40th JAPAN GOLF FAIR 2006
Japan Golf Fair Operational Secretariat
Tel: 03-3437-8400 Fax: 03-3437-8401

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
JAPAN SHOP 2006
NIHON KEIZAI SHINBUN, INC. CULTURAL AND BUSINESS PROJECTS BUREAU
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
ARCHITECTURE + CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS 2006
Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc.
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
RETAILTECH JAPAN 2006
Show Organizer
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
IC CARD WORLD 2006
Nihon Keizai Simbun, Inc.
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
SECURITY SHOW 2006
Secretariat of SECURITY SHOW
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
HOTERES JAPAN 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
Tel: 03-3434-1377 Fax: 03-3434-8076

3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
CATEREX JAPAN 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
Tel: 03-3434-1377 Fax: 03-3434-8076

3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
JAPAN FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT SHOW 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
Tel: 03-3434-1377 Fax: 03-3434-8076

3/19 (Sun) *Public*
HARU COMIC CITY 11
Akaboo
Tel: 03-3225-8520

3/22 (Wed) – 3/24 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
Tokyo Health Industry Show 2006
CMP JAPAN Co., Ltd.
Tel: 03-5296-1017 Fax: 03-5296-1018

3/23 (Thu) – 3/26 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
Photo Imaging EXPO 2006
JAPAN COLOR-PHOTO FINISHERS' ASSOCIATION
Tel: 03-3288-0337 Fax: 03-3288-0338

3/23 (Thu) – 3/26 (Sun) *Trade/Public*
Tokyo International Anime Fair 2006
Tokyo International Anime Fair Executive Committee
Tel: 03-5320-4786 Fax: 03-5388-1463

3/31 (Fri) – 4/2 (Sun) *Public ¥1500*
The 33rd Tokyo Motorcycle Show 2006
Tokyo Motorcycle Show Operation Secretariat
Tel: 03-5847-7045 Fax: 03-5847-7046

The events schedule is based on information received from organizers. It is subject to change without notice. For more information, please contact the management office for each event.

Science Council of Japan

The Science Council of Japan (SCJ) was established under the Science Council of Japan Law in 1949 as a special agency under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister. The SCJ consists of 210 elected members who represent 790,000 scientists nationwide.

As of October 1, 2005, the organizational structure of the SCJ underwent reform with the existing seven divisions being scaled down to three. Other reforms include: the establishment of the Management Board that makes decision on specific issues commissioned by the General Assembly, the appointment of an additional vice president responsible for international affairs, reinforcement of policy proposal functions, the creation of a network for the scientific community and the further strengthening of international activities.

In addition, along with making proposals based on accurate scientific knowledge and the good sense of scientists to society, the SCJ remains committed to promoting better understanding of science that contributes to the general improvement of people's lives.

2006 SCJ Joint International Conference Schedule

20th IUBMB International Congress of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and 11th FAOBMB Congress	June 18-23, 2006 Kyoto International Conference Hall
Internationl Congress of CARS 2006 (Computer Assisted Radiology and Surgery 2006)	June 28-July 1, 2006 Osaka International Convention Center
2006 International Political Science Association (IPSA) World Congress in Fukuoka	July 9-13, 2006 Fukuoka International Congress Center
19th International Mineralogical Association (IMA)	July 23-28, 2006 International Conference Center Kobe
ICOB-5 & ISCNP-25 IUPAC International Conference on Biodiversity and Natural Products	July 23-28, 2006 Kyoto International Conference Hall
International Conference on Magnetism (ICM) 2006	August 20-25, 2006 Kyoto International Conference Hall
2006 International Congress for Psychotherapy in Japan and The Third International Conference of the Asian Federation for Psychotherapy	August 28-September 1, 2006 Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo
The 16th International Microscopy Congress (IMC16)	September 3-8, 2006 Sapporo Convention Center

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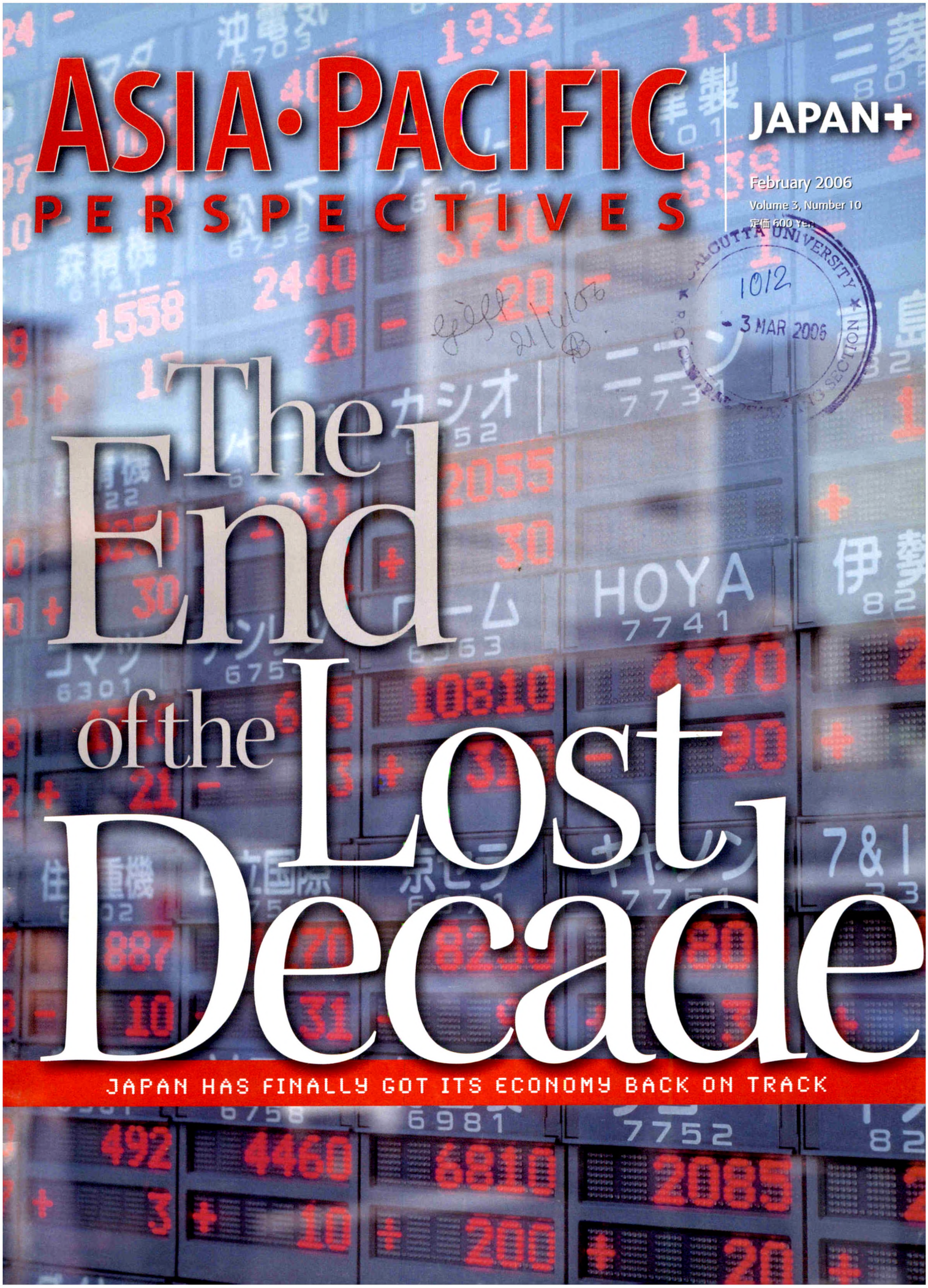


ASIA·PACIFIC PERSPECTIVES

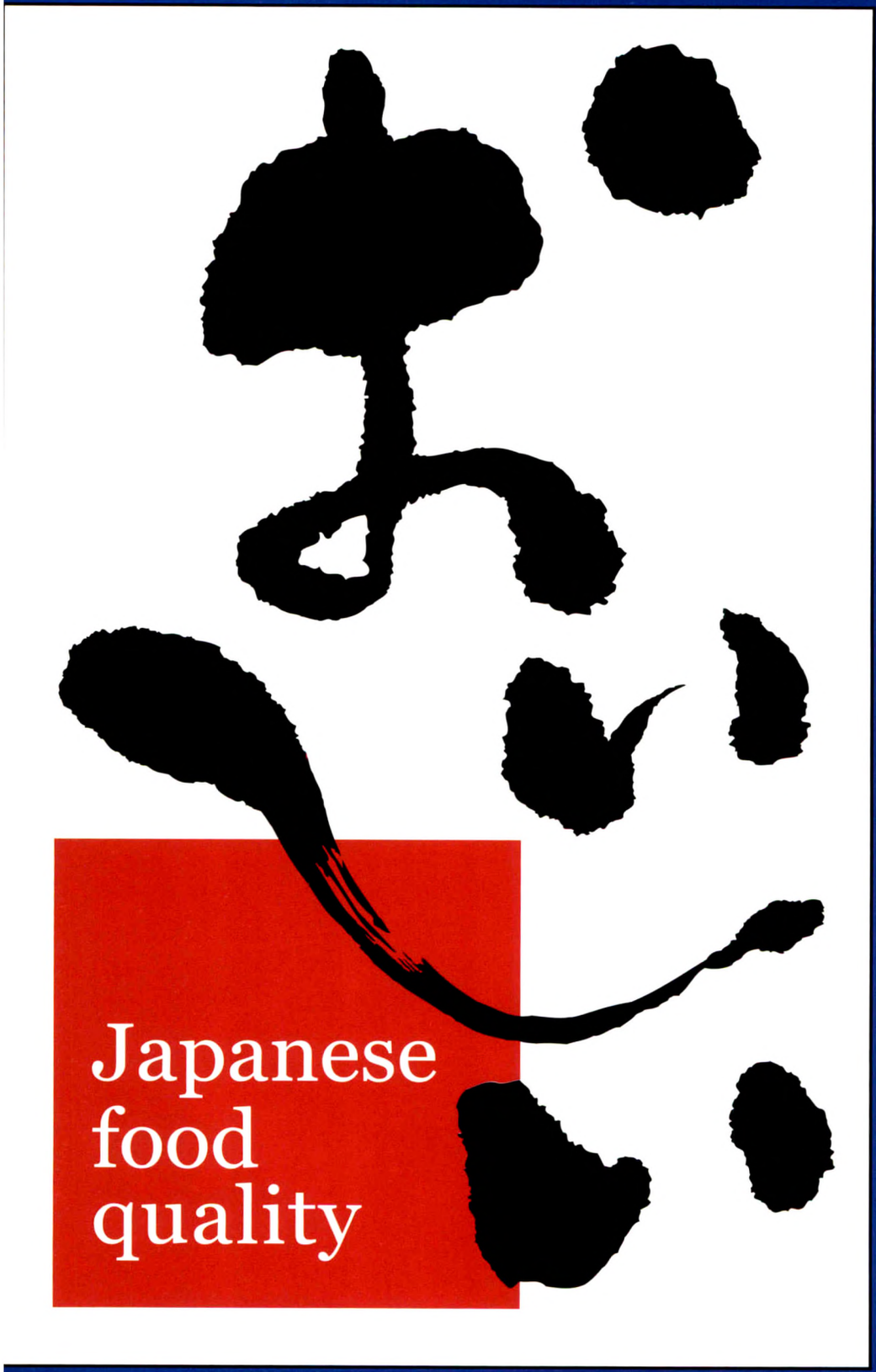
JAPAN+

February 2006
Volume 3, Number 10
定価 600 Yen

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY
1012
3 MAR 2006
SECTION

The End of the Lost Decade

JAPAN HAS FINALLY GOT ITS ECONOMY BACK ON TRACK



This emblem has been created to symbolize the efforts of the Japanese government and the private sector which have joined forces to proactively promote the export of Japanese agricultural, forestry and fisheries products and foodstuffs.

We plan to use the emblem widely as part of a unified approach to the promotion of the export of Japanese products and foodstuffs. The emblem will be placed directly on to exported Japanese products, on products exhibited at food fairs and other promotional events, and will feature in pamphlets aimed at overseas audiences.

"おいしい" (pronounced "oishii") means "delicious or tasty" in English.

For further details regarding the emblem, please access:
http://www.maff.go.jp/yusyutsu/logo.html

For further inquiries, please contact:
Export Promotion Office, International Trade and Tariff Division, International Affairs Department,
Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
E-mail: yusyututaisaku@nm.maff.go.jp

A SECURITIES COMPANY IN TOKYO'S YAESU FINANCIAL DISTRICT SHOWS THE RISE OF JAPANESE STOCK PRICES. PHOTO: SEIYA KAWAMOTO

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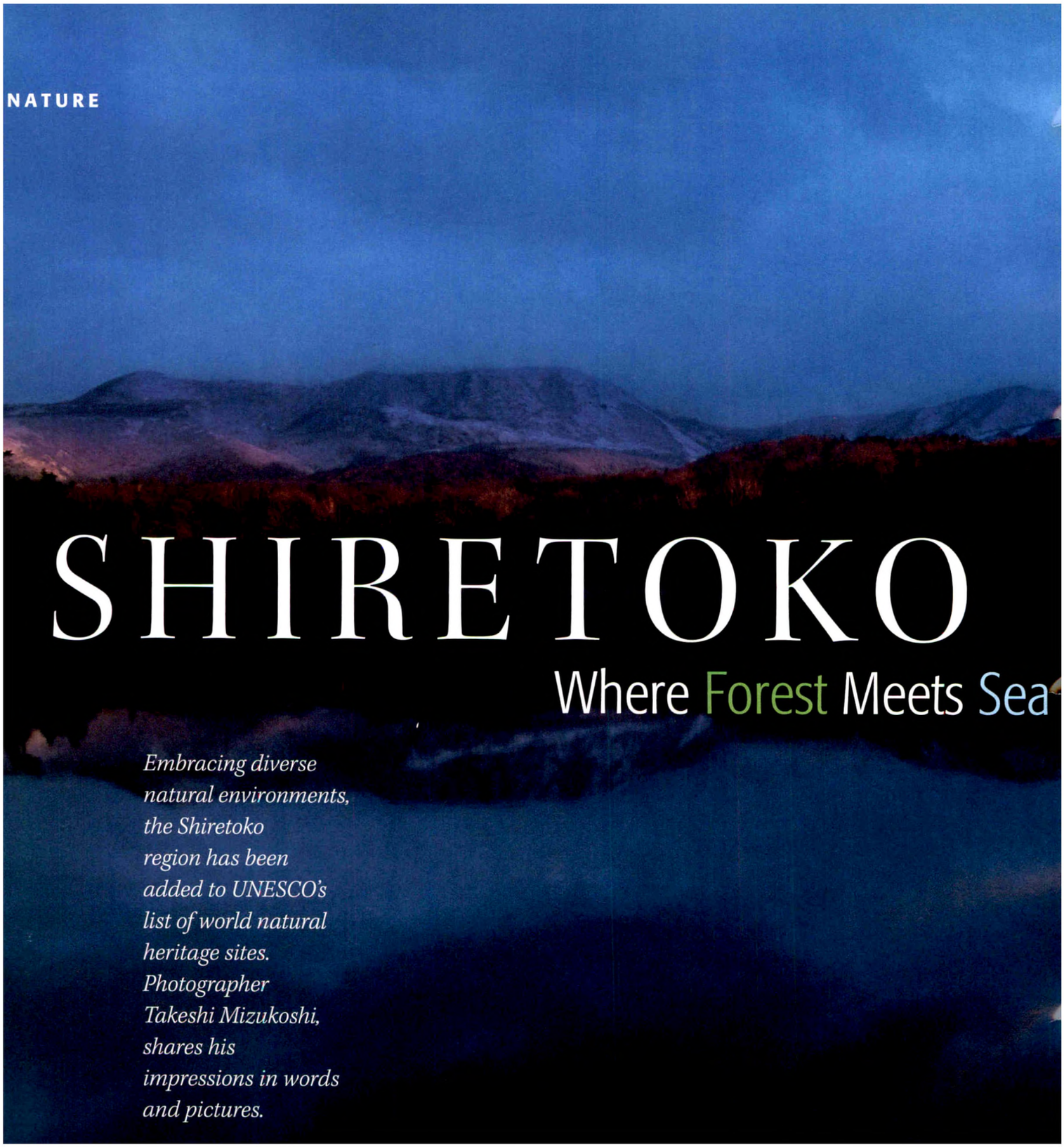


SHIRETOKO

Where Forest Meets Sea

Embracing diverse natural environments, the Shiretoko region has been added to UNESCO's list of world natural heritage sites. Photographer Takeshi Mizukoshi, shares his impressions in words and pictures.

Sanko, one of the Shiretoko Five Lakes, awaits the arrival of winter.

The Shiretoko Peninsula seems to soar straight out of the ocean, like a wedge driven into the Sea of Okhotsk. Its profile is dominated by the towering Shiretoko mountain range, part of the Kuril volcanic belt. The Shiretoko range runs from Mt. Io to Mt. Shiretoko (1,254 m), with the peninsula's highest peak, Mt. Rausu (1,661 m), located at its center. Since the peaks are located only about 1,600 meters from the coast, the marine ecosystem rapidly gives way to an alpine one, and this merging of sea and land-based ecosystems is both fascinating and dramatic. Precipitous cliffs along the coast prevented the building of a road around the peninsula, leaving its northern end a primordial haven devoid of human habitation. There is no other place in Japan where such an extensive coastal area remains untouched by human hand.

At 44 degrees north, Shiretoko is located in the subarctic climatic zone. Since it is right on the boundary between the arctic and cool zones, flora and fauna from both zones coexist. Its forests are mixed, with broad-leaved trees growing alongside conifers to give attractive displays of color in spring and autumn. The reds and yellows of deciduous trees such as *katsura (Cercidiphyllum japonicum)*, *mizunara (Quercus crispula)* and maples make a stunning contrast with the almost black hues of evergreens like *todomatsu (Abies sachalinensis)*, ezomatsu *(Picea jezoensis)* and *akaezomatsu (Picea glehnii)*.

The Sea of Okhotsk is the southernmost sea ice area in the northern hemisphere, and life forms carried in by the ice make it an extremely resource-rich ocean. The coast of the Shiretoko Peninsula, where land and sea meet, has some remarkable characteristics. The salinity of the sea ice which reaches its shores is diluted by fresh water from Russia's Amur River, and frozen life forms are swept in by seasonal winds and ocean currents. The sea ice contains large volumes of plankton, enriching the ocean. Abundant fish and other marine life provide food for seabirds, which in turn sustain larger birds of prey and brown bears.

Not only are the animals and plants of Shiretoko exposed to a severe winter environment where temperatures can plummet below minus 30°C, they also have to withstand howling winds and heavy snowfalls. Moreover, the landform of the area, with its sudden rise from sea level to mountain peaks, brings many rainy and cloudy days with few hours of sunlight. This makes for an ecosystem that is very hard on its inhabitants, yet surprisingly mixed; alpine plants are found on the coast, and mountain fauna such as alpine butterflies can be seen even at sea level.

One incident clearly illustrates the story of just how harsh the seas around Shiretoko were in the winter of 2004–2005. A pod of orca whales was surrounded by sea ice suddenly blown south by strong winds and was unable to find a means of escape. Although some whales did manage to get away, several were stranded and perished. Seven cetacean species including porpoises, minke whales and sperm whales are known to visit the Shiretoko coast. Among these species the orca is the most feared for its agility; yet even for the orca the seas surrounding the Shiretoko Peninsula are an unforgiving environment requiring constant vigilance.

Sea eagles hitch a ride on the sea ice to travel

In spring, brown bears wean their cubs

THE ROAD

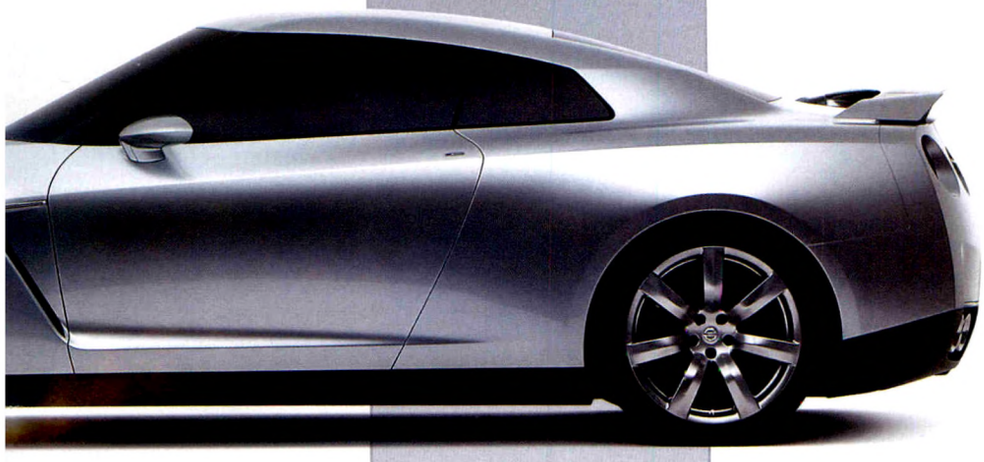
THE HUGE EXHIBITION HALLS at the 39th Tokyo Motor Show 2005 were packed with visitors, charging the atmosphere with excitement and leaving observers wondering where on earth such crowds of car fanatics come from.

The biennial passenger car show has a distinguished history stretching back to 1954, and in recent years the environment has been a hot topic. Cars vie for attention with more than just the latest in eco-technology, however. For automakers, the event is a chance to show off vehicles put together with loving care in every detail.

A fine example is Nissan's GT-R PROTO, designed to offer the ultimate in driving pleasure. Just sinking into the driver's seat is enough to set the heart pounding, and it's no surprise this car has become a firm favorite with enthusiasts. Even after production was discontinued in 2002 due to stricter exhaust emission regulations, fans clamored for the model's return, and 2007 will finally see its global comeback. The bodywork, closely resembling that destined for the production model, underlines the vehicle's performance and scores full marks for its powerful lines. Although detailed specifications are not yet available, Toru Ishikawa, Manager of Product Communications at Nissan gave a hint of what's to come. "While honoring the GT-R pedigree with design elements such as the tail lights, we plan to make the most of the latest technologies and rebuild the vehicle from the ground up as a sports model. At last we can fulfill the expectations of even the most passionate GT-R fans. More than anything, we want them to be able to experience the ultimate in driving pleasure that the new GT-R will offer."

Another car turning heads at the show was Toyota's Lexus LF-A. Under the hood of this sports model now under development at Lexus lurks an all-new V-10 engine. The newcomer was on display alongside Lexus production cars. Toyota

LEXUS LF-A



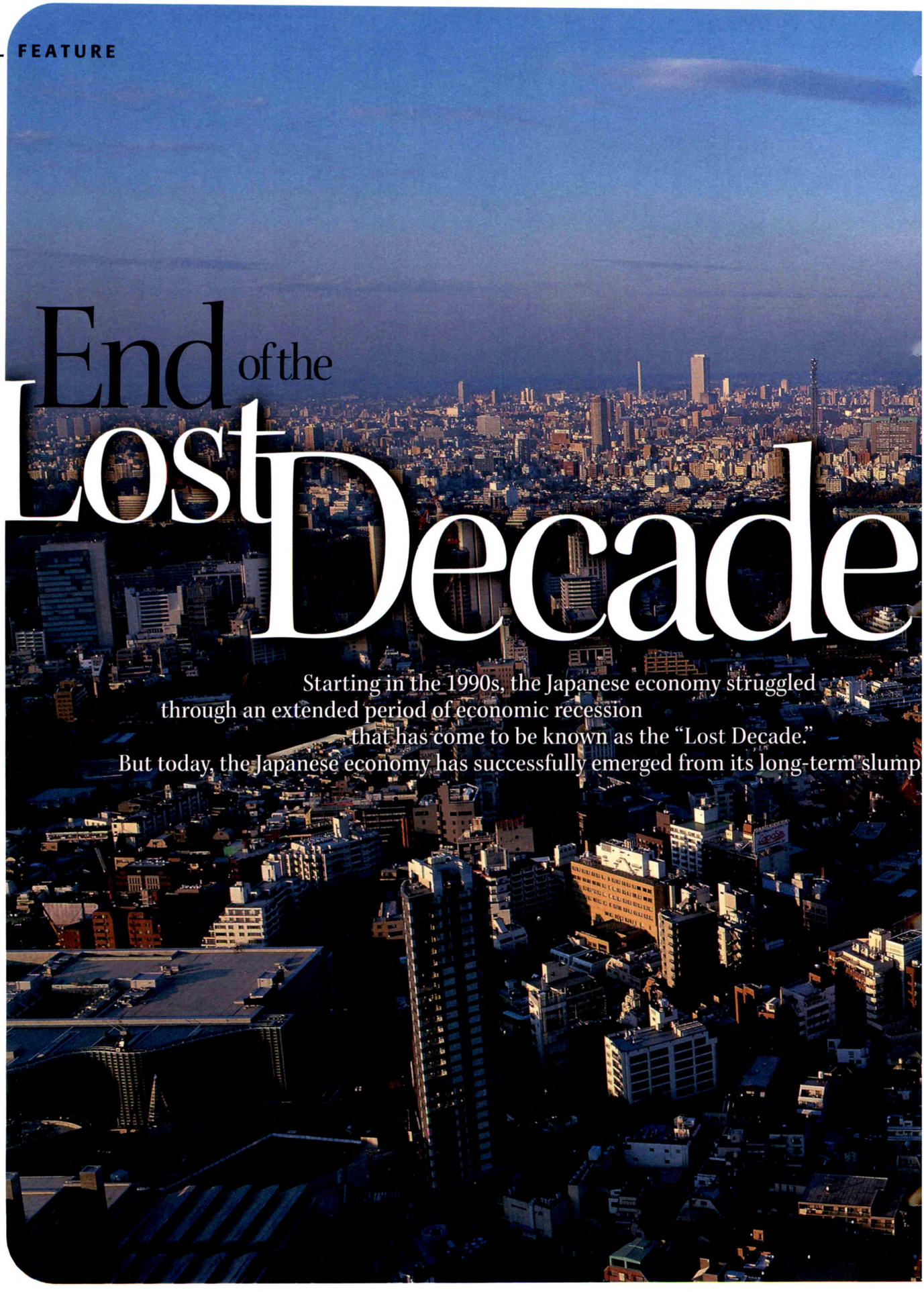
AHEAD

THESE DAYS THE ENVIRONMENT IS A KEY CONSIDERATION WHEN THE CONVERSATION TURNS TO CARS. BUT CLEANER ENGINES ARE NOT ALL THE VEHICLES OF THE FUTURE HAVE TO OFFER.

launched the Lexus brand in the US in 1989 and it first appeared at the Tokyo Motor Show in 2003 with cars brought in from the other side of the Pacific. That initial display merely provided an introductory overview, but this time the exhibit featured previews of the LF-Sh ultra-luxury sedan and the GS 450h premium sports sedan, two hybrid vehicles scheduled to hit the market in 2006. "While Japan originally learnt about cars from the West, Lexus vehicles embody a distinctly Japanese culture of craftsmanship and aesthetics applied to manufacturing," says Akihiro Nagaya, General Manager of the Lexus Brand Planning Department. "The sense of finely mellowed authenticity goes beyond the engineering to include all the artistic and ancillary aspects of the cars, and is presented as a complete "package." It is that fusion of art and engineering that defines Lexus." The days of consumers simply seeking high-tech products at lower prices are over; the buyers of tomorrow will look for culture as well as functionality. Perhaps that accounts for the rising status of Asian brands.

The Tokyo Motor Show's 50-year history has reflected the trends of the times such as concerns over rising traffic accidents and the environmental impact of vehicles. Along with competitive technologies and designs, safety and eco-friendliness have become requisites for all vehicles. Today's battles are fought over what kind of value carmakers can add to their products. In addition to the Nissan GT-R PROTO and the Lexus models, this trend was illustrated in splendid style by exhibits such as Honda's Sports 4 Concept, a fuel cell vehicle designed to be stylish and fun to drive, and the Mazda Senku, which teamed an innovative rotary hybrid engine with a top-quality interior. The 2005 show had plenty to excite any dedicated car-lover, and by the time it drew to a close the world had glimpsed a preview of what lies ahead for the future of automotive technology.

– YUKA OGURA



The End of the Lost Decade

Starting in the 1990s, the Japanese economy struggled through an extended period of economic recession that has come to be known as the "Lost Decade." But today, the Japanese economy has successfully emerged from its long-term slump

SHIN'ICHI SATO

SPECIAL FEATURE REPORTING BY
SHIN'ICHI OKADA, TADAHIRO OHKOSHI
AND MAYUMI NAKAMURA

REBIRTH
Development of the large-scale Tokyo Midtown complex on the site of the former Defense Agency headquarters in Roppongi is expected to be completed in the spring of 2007. After the economic stagnation of the post-bubble period, Tokyo appears set to regain its former glory as one of the world's most attractive cities.

Back on Track

The Japanese economy struggled throughout the 1990s and beyond. But over the past several years it has staged a remarkable recovery. Professor Hiroko Ota gives an analysis of the current state of the revitalized Japanese economy.

SEIYA KAWAMOTO

RETURN TO THE CITIES

The bursting of the economic bubble saw a huge increase in the populations of Tokyo and many of Japan's major cities, in what became known as the "Return to the Cities" phenomenon. Tokyo's Minato Ward, in particular, saw a boom in the construction of high-rise buildings. The 869-apartment Capital Mark Tower—a joint construction by Tokyu Land Corporation and four other companies, and the largest apartment complex in the greater Tokyo area—is proving particularly popular. The second stage of apartment sales has already ended and approx. 90% of the apartments have already been sold. Potential buyers are visiting the model showroom in their droves.

Japan today is in the midst of an extended period of economic expansion. The upswing began in January 2002 and, as of November 2005, had continued for approximately 46 months. Reflecting this economic recovery, the inflation-adjusted economic growth rate was 1.9% in fiscal 2004, and is expected to remain a healthy 1.6% for fiscal 2005 (according to July 2005 Cabinet Office figures). At long last it would appear that the Japanese economy is steadily getting back on track.

Following the crash of the economic bubble in 1991, companies struggled with the so-called "three excesses"— excess employment, excess capacity and excess debt. In order to throw off these encumbrances, many Japanese corporations, particularly in the manufacturing sector, drastically restructured. Some companies downsized, laying off some of their employees. Others took part in major mergers that crossed traditional corporate group boundary lines. As a result of this massive self-help effort, Japanese companies have become much more streamlined and corporate profitability has increased significantly. The tough measures taken by the private sector have paid rich dividends and have been among the most salient factors in the recent economic recovery.

In fact, corporate operating profits have increased for three years running. Large manufacturing concerns, in particular, have achieved annual profit growth of 5.6% (according to July 2005 Cabinet Office figures). This is even higher than the bubble glory days of the 1980s. After the bursting of the economic bubble and up until the recent recovery, the Japanese government tried a variety of economic intervention packages in an effort to spark some life back into the economy. But none of the large-scale government investments or public works projects achieved the desired results. In contrast, we can see that the recent economic recovery has been accomplished in large part by the efforts of reinvigorated Japanese companies that have overcome the economic bubble's negative legacy of the "three excesses."

The economic recovery has also been helped by favorable economic conditions in the United States and China. The growing Chinese economy has been particularly important. China's economy has been robust since 2002, and has shown rapid growth in demand for steel and glass materials. And the far-reaching reforms undertaken by Japan's manufacturing and materials industries have resulted in them being able to meet the great demand from China.

Meanwhile, the Chinese manufacturing industry today takes full advantage of its vast, low-cost labor force. By translating these low costs into rock-bottom retail prices for refrigerators, washing machines, televisions and other home appliances, along with office equipment, Chinese manufacturers have certainly gained the upper hand over Japanese competitors who produce exactly the same product. This is what was meant by the old adage "Beware the Chinese peril."

However, Japanese manufacturers have shifted their product development focus to high-quality, high-value-added goods. Thanks to their outstanding technological capabilities, Japanese companies have successfully maintained an advantage in the global market. When it comes to cars, Japanese manufacturers can offer the latest hybrid car, when it comes to home appliances, they are able to offer high image quality, slim-line TVs, and for steel products, there are the slim-line steel panels for use in automobiles. Put another way, Japanese companies are leveraging their high-tech capabilities to target a completely different segment of the overall market. Thus, they are not in direct competition with manufacturers in China and other Asian countries; rather they have successfully created a complementary relationship, and one that does not impede the Asian economic growth that is a major driving force behind the global economy.

And the good news doesn't end there. The upward trend in the corporate sector is beginning to have an effect on the household sector as well.

Unemployment figures hit a postwar high of 5.5% in January 2003. But by the second half of 2005, the numbers had improved to a little over 4%. While it is true that the number of part-time workers has grown, the proportion of the work force in part-time employment seems to have peaked as of 2005. Moreover, in anticipation of the postwar baby boomer generation beginning to reach retirement age starting in fiscal 2007, hiring of new graduates, particularly by large corporations, has already begun in earnest. These improvements to the employment situation have led to a rise in salaries, which in turn has had a positive effect on consumer spending. Notably, sales of high-priced consumer goods such as luxury vehicles and flat-panel televisions are up. The real estate market, especially for expensive, well-placed luxury condominiums in and around Tokyo, is also booming. The current economic recovery has taken a long time to benefit the corporate and household sectors, but the economic ball is finally beginning to roll merrily along completely on its own momentum.

According to the Bank of Japan's quarterly *Tankan* survey, or Short-Term Economic Survey of Principal Enterprises in Japan, released in October 2005, capital investment in fiscal 2005 grew by 6.8% over the previous year. Capital investment by large manufacturing companies showed an even more impressive annual expansion of 9.3%. These kinds of forward-looking investments amply demonstrate that the Japanese economy has now finalized its post-bubble housecleaning, and is set to venture confidently into the future.

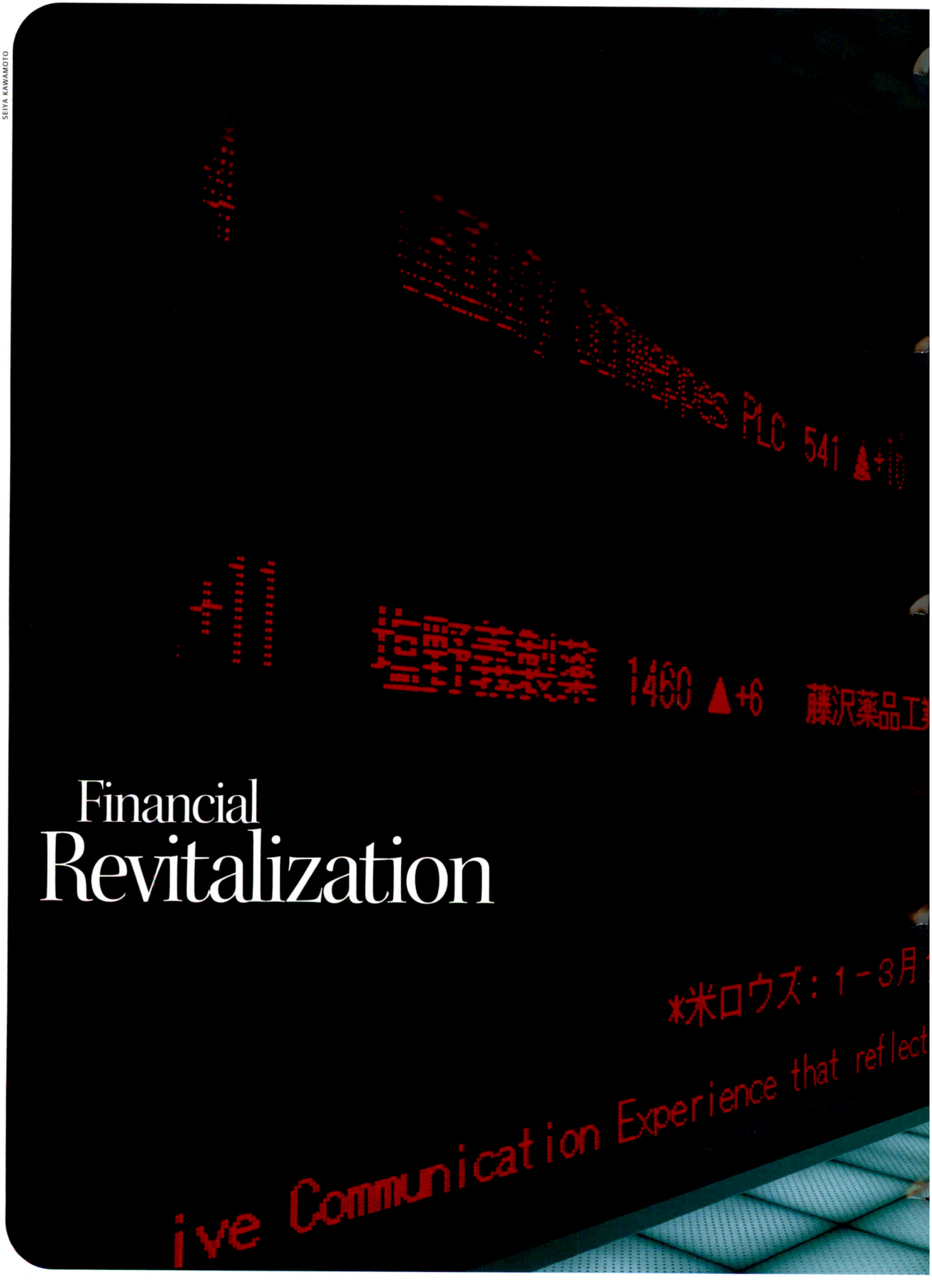
HIROKO OTA joined the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) in 1997 where she has been a professor since 2001. Her focus is on public sector economics and economic policy. She also specializes in analysis of the Japanese economy, and from 2002 to 2004, served in the Cabinet Office as Director-General for Policy Planning in charge of economic and fiscal policy.

SEIYA KAWAMOTO

LUXURIOUS LEXUS

Accompanying the economic recovery has been an upturn in consumer confidence, particularly vis-à-vis high-priced luxury products. This trend was typified by the Toyota Motor Corporation's launch of its Lexus brand in the Japanese market in August 2005. The Lexus brand has already proved extremely popular in the US and other global markets, and the Lexus Meguro showroom in a leafy suburb of Tokyo's Meguro Ward now has an impressive lineup of luxury cars in the 4–7 million yen price range.

SEIYA KAWAMOTO



Financial Revitalization

CRISIS AVERTED

Having divested itself of the heavy burden of bad debts, Japan is now in full recovery mode. Many companies are reporting higher earnings and stock prices are steadily beginning to rise. Bloomberg's ICE showroom, located in Tokyo's swish Marunouchi Building, offers the latest stock information.

The problem of non-performing loans, or bad debt, constituted a major obstacle to the recovery of Japan's lagging post-bubble economy. The term "bad debt" refers to loaned money which the borrowing corporations have difficulty in returning to the lending banks due to financial constraints.

When Japan was enjoying the peak of its bubble economy, banks lent huge amounts of money to companies, accepting real estate as collateral. However, following the collapse of the bubble, many borrowing corporations saw their business projects fall through. Prices on real estate—which had been widely used to guarantee loans—also tumbled. Thus, many assets used as collateral ended up being worth less than the original value of the loans they were supposed to guarantee. As a result of this surge in bad debt, banks found themselves in crisis. One after another, banks such as Hokkaido Takushoku Bank, Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan, and Nippon Credit Bank went bankrupt.

Internationally active banks are required to conform to the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) capital ratio standards. But in order to live up to the BIS standards, Japanese banks which found themselves with a lowered capital ratio as a result of bad debt were reluctant to extend new loans, and in some cases, even withdrew credit from customer corporations. Unless this credit crunch could be overcome, Japanese banks were in danger of no longer fulfilling the necessary role of financial intermediary, wherein money entrusted to banks by depositors is lent as capital to corporations. And if that were to happen, money would stop moving smoothly through society. Bankruptcies and unemployment would increase, and the recession would only worsen.

The Japanese government met the situation head-on, with a strong policy aimed at completely settling the "negative legacy" of the bubble era. The government's Financial Revitalization Program was unveiled in October 2002.

The program specifically targeted the bad debt of Japan's major banks, which had a dominating presence in the economy. It laid out a clear numerical goal of roughly halving major banks' non-performing loan ratios by fiscal 2004.

> Japanese banks were saddled with massive bad debt as a result of the collapsed bubble economy. However, through a financial revitalization program, Japan has made a spectacular recovery from this "negative legacy" of the bubble era.

In order to create a more robust financial system, the program also called for tougher assessment of major banks' assets. Moreover, it implemented measures to reinforce capital ratio standards and strengthen corporate governance.

On the other hand, clearing the slate of bad debt in this drastic manner could lead to restructuring and layoffs by debtor companies, increasing deflationary pressures. In response, the public and private sector joined forces to establish the Industrial Revitalization Corporation of Japan (IRCJ), which purchases debt from companies which are struggling but which are essentially sound and have potential for revitalization. A support program for small- and medium-sized enterprises, which were particularly hard hit by the banking credit crunch, was also set in motion.

The results of these efforts were immediately apparent. The non-performing loan ratio of the major banks in March 2002 was 8.4%. By March 2005, the end of the fiscal year, that figure had dropped to just 2.9%, more than meeting the initial numerical goal of the Financial Revitalization Program. In May, then Minister in charge of Financial Affairs Tatsuya Ito declared that "...the Japanese financial system is now entering into a new forward-looking phase aiming at establishing a desirable financial system for the future, having now moved beyond the emergency reaction." Japan has at last thrown off the heavy shackles of excess debt, and is now perfectly positioned to move confidently into a new and exciting stage.

ILLUSTRATIONS: AKI SOEDA

How are the structural reforms being pursued by the Koizumi administration changing Japan? We take a look at three separate areas undergoing reform.

Major Reforms

LEADING THE WAY

Prime Minister Koizumi has set a package of structural reforms into motion to breathe new life into the economy. Among his most successful reforms to date have been the privatization of Japan's postal services, urban revitalization projects and the authorizing of hundreds of special zones for structural reforms.

PRIVATIZING JAPAN POST

Established in 1871, the Japanese postal service has a long and proud history. However, due to deregulations in recent years, private corporations have begun offering letter and package delivery, as well as savings and insurance products similar to those provided by Japan Post. Also, under current laws, public corporations such as Japan Post face many restrictions on the types of products they can sell.

Meanwhile, postal services have been privatized in Germany, Holland, Great Britain and elsewhere. The now-privately run post offices have developed a wide range of new services, including the sale of financial products.

The winds of change are also blowing in Japan. In September 2004, the Koizumi Cabinet adopted basic guidelines for the privatization of the postal service. In October last year, a package of six separate privatization bills was passed in the Diet. Under the new laws, all Japan Post's services will be privatized and spun off into separate companies.

Up until now, funds collected under the Japan Post umbrella have been largely managed in the public sector—national and local public entities. Privatization of Japan Post will shift some 340 trillion yen from the public to the private sector. Further, as it stands now, the approximately 260,000 regular employees of Japan Post are national civil servants. With privatization, the status of those employees will be the same as that of employees of any other private sector company. The number of Japanese national government employees will decrease by roughly 30%.

The first step in the timeline for privatization is scheduled for October 2007, when Japan Post will be split up into a holding company and four separate branch companies: a network company; a postal delivery company; a postal savings bank; and a postal insurance company. The holding company is required to fully divest itself of all shares in the postal savings bank and postal insurance company by October 2017. At that point, the privatization process will reach full completion.

URBAN REVITALIZATION

Currently, central Tokyo is experiencing a massive boom in redevelopment. A whole new crop of hotspots has sprung up in the city, and there seems no end in sight for the building trend. Development of the large-scale Tokyo Midtown complex on the site of the former Defense Agency headquarters in Roppongi *(see photo pp.6-7)* is expected to be completed in the spring of 2007. Meanwhile, the construction of high-rise twin towers on the Yaesu side of Tokyo Station is expected to be finished by 2011.

As the Japanese economy expanded during the 1980s, Tokyo's reputation as an international city also rose. However, this excessive growth was not all positive. The rise and subsequent crash of the bubble economy was mirrored by a rise and crash in property values. As a result, strain and deterioration of the city's facilities became a noticeable problem. There are hopes that the recent large-scale redevelopment will help renew Tokyo's attractiveness as an international city.

The government is working to improve Tokyo and other urban areas as part of its program for economic revitalization. In May 2001 the central government set up the Urban Renaissance Headquarters, headed by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. In 2002 the Special Measures Act for Urban Renaissance, which aims to promote renovation of urban areas by the private sector, took effect. Under the law, the former Defense Agency headquarters site, the Yaesu side of Tokyo Station and some 61 other districts around the country were designated as "Special Districts for Urban Redevelopment"—a total of some 6,400 hectares. The designation allows for financial support of development projects, as well as significant easing of restrictions and smoothing of administrative procedures.

The sound of hammers ringing out once again in this post-bubble, post-lost decade era signifies the merging of the strengths of the public and private sectors. And that will be music to many ears.

SPECIAL ZONES FOR STRUCTURAL REFORM

The Japanese government started a system of Special Zones for Structural Reform in 2002 for the purpose of stimulating the economy through regulatory reforms.

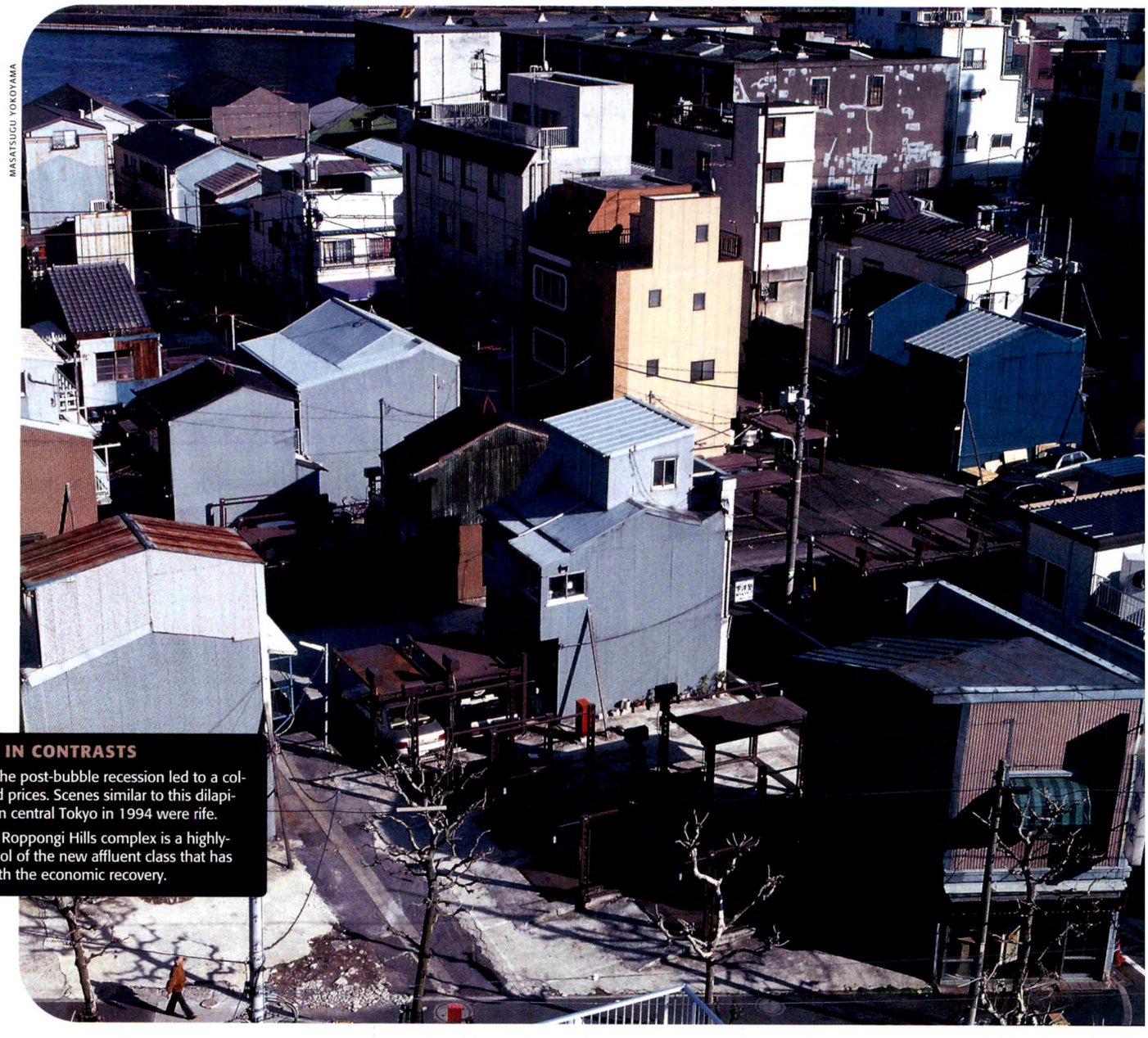
The system is a breakthrough for promoting structural reforms through experimental regulatory reforms by setting up specified zones where regulatory exceptions are used in accordance with the zones' specific circumstances. The regulatory exceptions are established on the basis of proposals received from local municipal bodies, private companies and others.

Previously, the generally-held principle had been to apply regulations uniformly to the entire country. But the Special Zone system leaves that mindset behind, heralding a new concept of promoting structural reform through deregulation based on local circumstances. The Special Zone system is set up so that deregulations which are deemed successful at the local level by a committee of private citizens can eventually be expanded to the national level.

As of December 2005, a total of 709 special zones had been created; 211 of these have already been adjudged so successful that their regulatory reforms have been expanded to the national level, and their status as special zones has been cancelled. Meanwhile deregulations in a further 498 special zones are currently in operation.

The approved plans apply to many fields including economy, industry, education, welfare and agriculture.

In this way, reforms aimed at maximizing the energy of local areas and the private sector are emerging one after another from the local level.



MASATSUGU YOKOYAMA

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

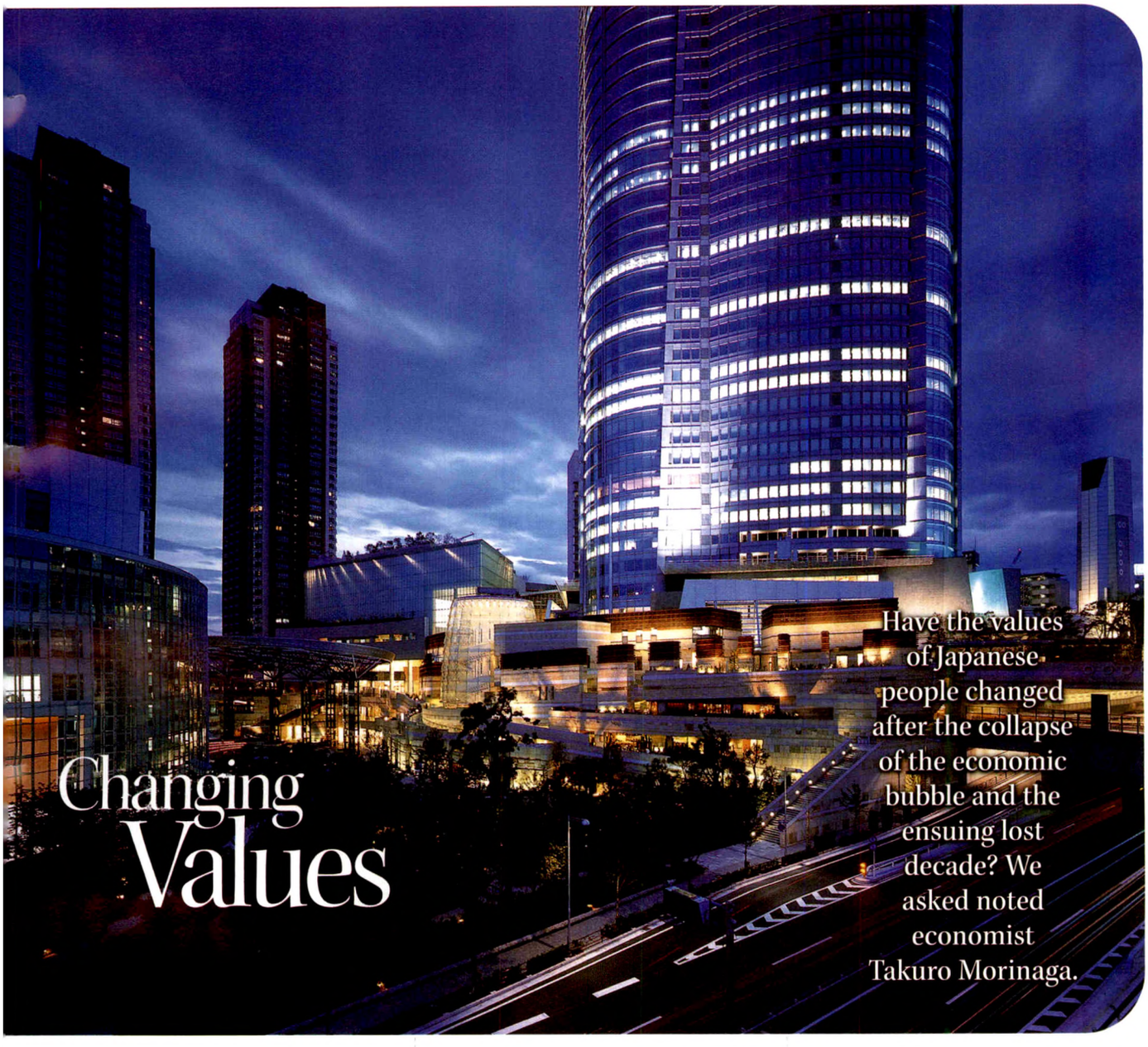
THIS PAGE: The post-bubble recession led to a collapse in land prices. Scenes similar to this dilapidated area in central Tokyo in 1994 were rife.

FACING: The Roppongi Hills complex is a highly-visible symbol of the new affluent class that has emerged with the economic recovery.

Japan 20 years ago was a country almost without economic divides—it prided itself on being a country in which everyone was middle class. Times have changed, though; deflation persisted following the collapse of the bubble economy, and the result has been layoffs (euphemistically referred to as "restructuring") and pay cuts. Deflation did not just reduce the income of the middle class, it also led to the birth of two new social classes in Japan. One of these was people not in full-time employment all struggling on an annual income of a little over a million yen or so. The other was the very small section of the population that was earning astronomical salaries in excess of a hundred million yen a year—these tend to be mainly people working for foreign financial institutions or IT companies. This latter group is typified by the so-called "Hills Tribe" that lives or works in Tokyo's plush Roppongi Hills complex.

So the most notable effect of the lost decade was the division of Japanese society into three strata: the top earners of over a hundred million yen a year, those on three to four million yen a year, and those on just over one million yen a year. This was a dramatic increase in earnings disparity; in fact, according to an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Relative Poverty Rate Survey that shows income divides, Japan ranked fifth in the world in terms of earnings disparity in 2005. This shows the drastic change that deflation has wrought, turning Japan from a country in which everyone was middle class into the fifth most unequal country in the world.

In this changing society, how have the Japanese people themselves changed? Up until 20 years or so ago, the Japanese people made up a society bound together by a rather indeterminate sort of thoughtfulness. For example, people would always lend a hand if they saw an elderly person in difficulty, or if they saw someone else's child misbehaving they would not hesitate to scold it. That was a virtue of Japanese society. I remember when I was a child everyone helped each other out—if you ran out of miso bean paste or soy sauce you could go straight round to a neighbor's house to borrow some. Japan was not run by rules so much as the indeterminate, unwritten code that shaped its society.



SHIN'ICHI SATO

Changing Values

Have the values of Japanese people changed after the collapse of the economic bubble and the ensuing lost decade? We asked noted economist Takuro Morinaga.

During the period of deflation, however, the values of the Japanese people changed dramatically. The rather opaque way of doing things was replaced by fair, transparent rules—a system based on the western model was gradually adopted. As part of the process of this change in values, the matter-of-fact idea that the weak should just be left behind began to appear. The values cherished by the previous generations started to collapse, to be replaced by a type of dog-eat-dog society governed by the survival of the fittest.

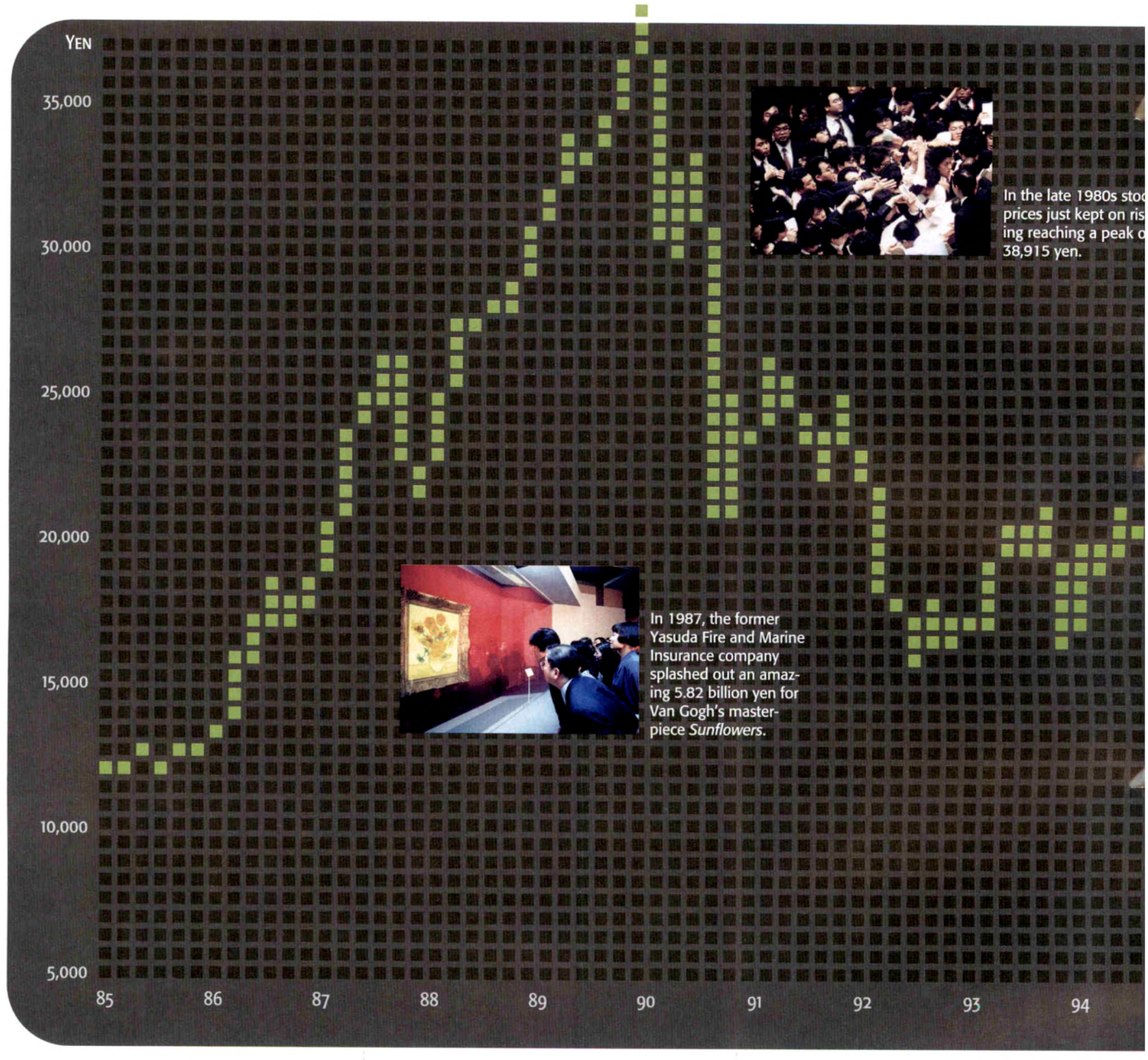
At the same time, though, there have been some reactions to this rapid change in values. One such reaction was the increase in the number of people aiming for a return to a lifestyle with a richness of quality, rather than material quantity. In the provinces, for example, old-fashioned shopping streets like those of the Showa era (1926–1989) are thriving, where people come into contact with each other and share in kindness and compassion. Also, books about living in the countryside away from the materialism of urban life are notching up exceptional sales. This seems to show that there are many people who do not feel themselves to be compatible with our furiously competitive society.

A different reaction to the change in values can be seen in the development of the *otaku* community which has sprung up around the Akihabara district of Tokyo. These Akihabara types find emotional refuge in their community, where they have a market only for themselves and they are busy forming their own distinctive economic system. The culture they create has a strong international competitiveness, and their creativity has the potential to play a big role in Japan over the years to come.

As we can see from the changes that have taken place, Japan's once homogenous lifestyle is starting to diversify.

TAKURO MORINAGA is a professor at Dokkyo University, specializing in macroeconomics, econometrics, labor economics, and educational planning. His publications include *Economics for Surviving in an Age of an Annual Income of Three Million Yen*, and *The Worst Possible Scenario – Who is to Blame for Japan's Current Economic Malaise?* He makes frequent radio and TV appearances as a social and economic commentator.

PHOTO RIGHT: KEIZO OKUBO



During the economic bubble of the latter half of the 1980s there was a huge increase in the number of companies, particularly in the non-manufacturing industry sector, expanding their business through capital investment. The money for this investment was mostly borrowed from banks against collateral of property. The background to this stretches back to the early 1970s; since the oil shock of 1973, the major companies in the manufacturing industry sector—once frequent borrowers from banks—were no longer borrowing from domestic banks, preferring instead to procure their own funds by issuing overseas bonds. Deprived of this former customer base, the banks rapidly expanded their lending to the non-manufacturing industry sector, such as real estate or transport and distribution companies. The principal feature of the economic bubble is that as speculation of stock and real estate grew more frantic the price of stock and real estate spiraled upwards, fuelling further speculation. A great many companies in the non-manufacturing sector moved into share dealing and other financial management techniques.

Fortunes were being made in speculation and the whole country felt the benefits of the booming economy, but the good times could not continue forever. In 1989 the Bank of Japan converted to monetary tightening measures in order to check the steep rise in the price of land. The result was a slump in stock prices from the beginning of 1990, and the land price bubble burst shortly afterwards. The whole Japanese economy was eventually dragged into recession, remaining in a state of stagnation for more than ten years—the "lost decade." At the height of the bubble in 1989 the Nikkei Index (the average price of stock on the Tokyo Stock Exchange) reached an all-time high of 38,915 yen; this continued to fall, sinking to a post-bubble low of 7,607 yen by 2003 *(see graph)*.

When the economic bubble burst, companies tried to increase their sales by increasing turnover in order to be able to repay the huge loans they had taken out during the boom. However, prices fell as a result of the glut of goods and services flooding the market. This fall in prices is what we call "deflation," and as the fall persisted, companies had to increase sales just to maintain themselves at their previous levels. Because all companies were taking

Chronicle of the Japanese Economy

What happened to the Japanese economy before, during and after the lost decade? Macroeconomist Kikuo Iwata, a professor at Gakushuin University Faculty of Economics, gives his analysis.

Construction work on an apartment block grinds to a half with the onset of the post-bubble recession.

The Nikkei Stock Average slumps to a record low of 7,607 yen in April 2003.

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PHOTOS (L–R): KYODO; JIJI; PANA; JIJI

the same steps to cope with deflation, prices fell even further and companies were even less able to repay the debt hanging round their necks. They tried to raise money to repay their debt by selling off the land and stock they had acquired during the rush to speculate, but land and stock prices were slumping; companies became trapped by asset deflation as the value of their assets continued to plummet endlessly. Deflation and asset deflation became a vicious circle.

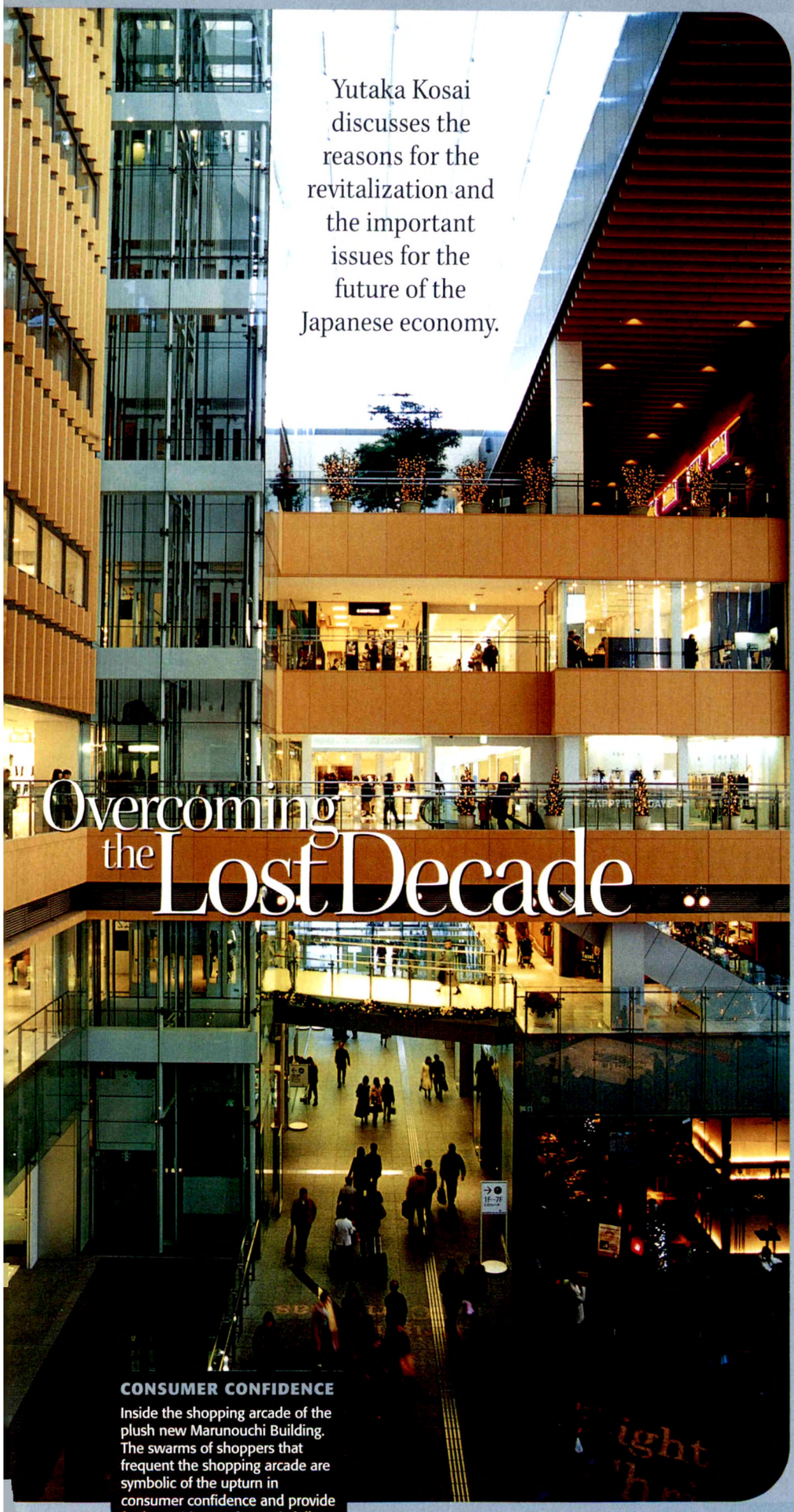
During this time many companies were unable to repay their debt and went bankrupt, while there was an increase in the amount of debt that could not be repaid to banks and this ended up as bad debt, or more euphemistically referred to as "non-performing loans." Under this situation, companies turned to layoffs and other cuts to reduce personnel expenses. A notable result of this corporate restructuring was a huge reduction in the number of regular, full-time workers. And this has further resulted in the number of part-time, temporary and other non-full-time workers now accounting for some 33% of the total workforce.

There were signs of recovery on a number of occasions during the deflationary period, such as in 1996 and 2000, but in each case the recovery proved short-lived. The present, full-fledged economic recovery started in 2002. One of the reasons for the recovery is that during the lost decade of economic stagnation, companies carried out staff cutbacks and other restructuring, and they refrained from capital investment; the result was that they largely curbed the excesses of personnel and facilities that marked the previous period. Furthermore, there has been a huge increase in exports as a result of China's economic growth and the upturn in the US economy. Overseas sales are increasing, particularly in the manufacturing industry sector, and we are now seeing the start of sudden improvements in corporate profits. One of the most vital factors in ensuring the continuation of the present economic climate is going to be the extent to which these profits find their way back to the employees.

KIKUO IWATA currently serves as a professor at Gakushuin University Faculty of Economics. His many publications include *Learn Economics* and *The Showa Depression*.

Overcoming the Lost Decade

Yutaka Kosai discusses the reasons for the revitalization and the important issues for the future of the Japanese economy.



CONSUMER CONFIDENCE
Inside the shopping arcade of the plush new Marunouchi Building. The swarms of shoppers that frequent the shopping arcade are symbolic of the upturn in consumer confidence and provide further evidence of Japan's full economic recovery.

In November 2004 the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) responded to the recovery of the Japanese economy, which had continued since the start of 2002, with the announcement of an economic outlook stating that, supported by capital investment and consumer spending, the Japanese economy could be expected to continue to make a robust expansion. In October 2005 the British journal *The Economist* published a feature article entitled "The Sun Also Rises" which examined the recovery of the Japanese economy. Apparently, most of the world's economists are now in agreement that the Japanese economy is indeed showing real signs of recovery.

But why did it take the Japanese economy more than ten long years to recover from the bursting of the economic bubble? After World War II Japan steadily pushed forward the "catch-up" economic system typical of rapidly developing countries; it exported high-quality goods manufactured at low cost using superior technology imported from advanced countries and by taking advantage of its inexpensive labor force. This strategy brought about the economic boom of the 1960s and powered the transformation of Japan into an economic giant by the latter half of the 1980s.

During this period, Japan should have begun structural reforms which were needed in order to bring about the transformation from a catch-up economic system to the economic system of a developed country and one appropriate to an economic giant. Some reforms toward this end were undertaken—the Maekawa Report of 1986, for example, advocated increased domestic demand to correct the disparity in the balance of accounts. However, most people were still drunk on the rather pleasing idea of "Japan As Number One." The looser monetary policy that Japan pursued after the 1985 Plaza Accord left people with surplus capital, which they poured into speculation in stock and real estate; the economy was on a runaway course toward the crash of 1991. After the bubble burst,

LEFT: An October 2005 edition of *The Economist* proclaimed Japan's return to full economic health.

BELOW: Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi *(center)* and then Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy Heizo Takenaka *(right)* make their first appearance at a meeting of the Council of Economic and Fiscal Policy in May 2001.

Japan found itself having to square up to the dual problem of changing its economic structure and sorting out the mess left by the bubble. This dual problem was a major reason for the delay in economic recovery.

During the recession, the government tried several times to kick start the economy through various economic measures involving massive public investment. However, although the economy would show signs of picking up immediately after the measures were carried out it always stalled again, and these measures never brought about the full-fledged recovery they were supposed to. Ultimately, the half-hearted measures amounted to no more than a waste of precious time before real action was taken to address the structural problems facing the economy.

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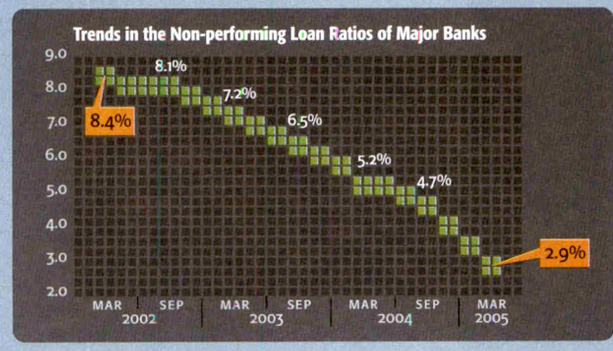


It was at this time, in April 2001 when the economy had reached its lowest state since the beginning of the recession, that the government of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was inaugurated. Adopting the slogan "No Growth Without Reform," Koizumi changed track from the traditional way of shoring up the unsteady economy. Instead, he set about more radical treatment in the form of structural reforms. The best example of the success of these reforms can be seen in the Financial Revitalization Program, headed by then Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy and Financial Services Heizo Takenaka under Koizumi's powerful leadership.

The Financial Revitalization Program was an affirmation of the government's determination not to tolerate further procrastination over the country's economic woes, and financial institutions began to make renewed efforts to reduce the non-performing loans (NPL) in accordance with government guidelines. This has proved very successful; there has been a big reduction in the amount of NPL, and the financial system that underlies all economic activity is now on much firmer ground. Another government measure was the establishment of the Industrial Revitalization Corporation of Japan (IRCJ) to help companies that were faced with financial difficulties to reorganize and regain a stable business footing. The IRCJ acts as a safety net for companies that are essentially sound but are forced into financial hardship by giving support to an early resumption of business—it thus encourages revitalization rather than liquidation, and a healthy business environment.

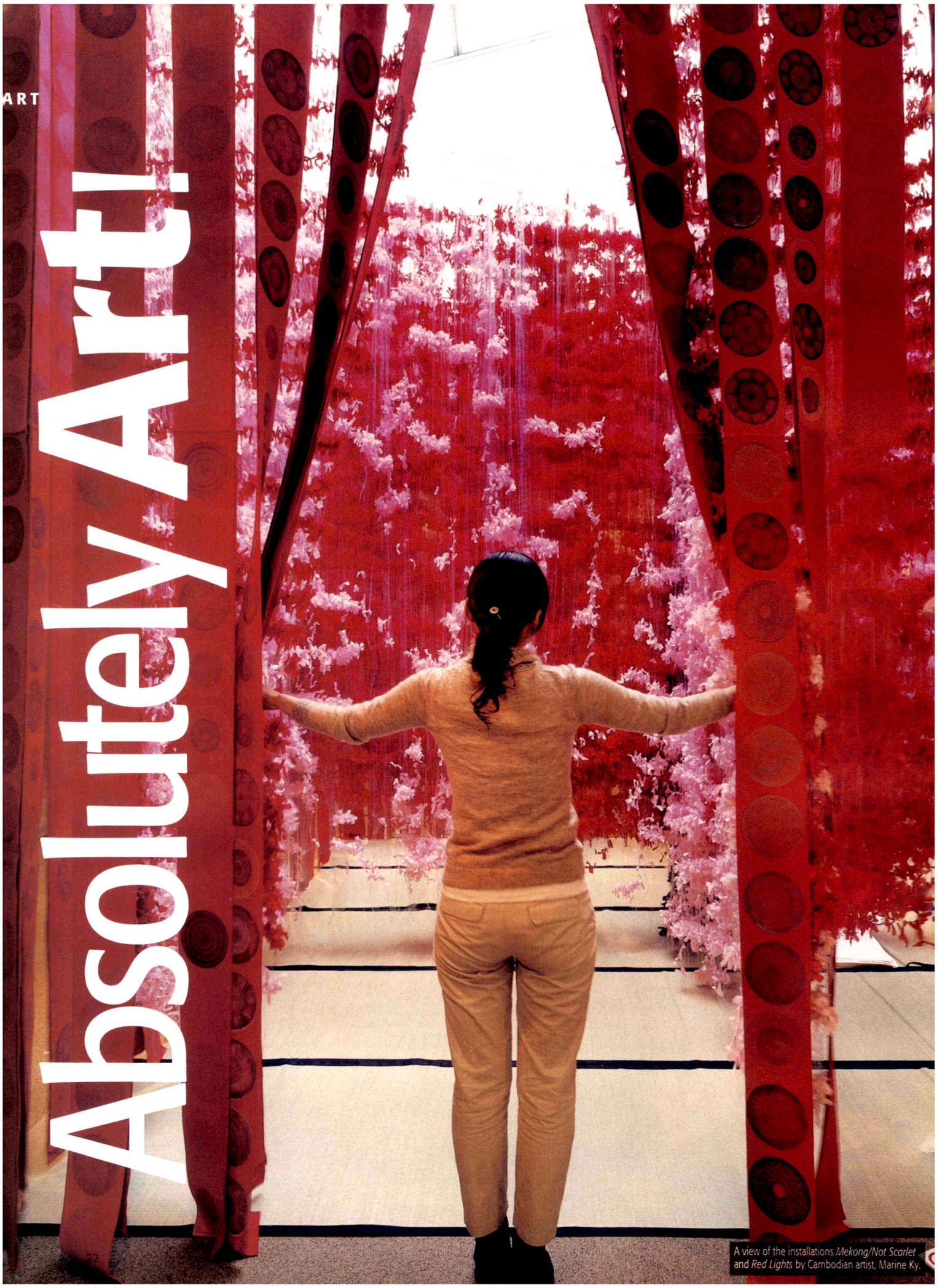
The Koizumi government has also advanced other policies to further oil the wheels of corporate activity, such as revisions to the Commercial Code with the aim of promoting corporate restructuring, and the Invest Japan campaign which aims at attracting dynamic international management practices and foreign investment into the Japanese economy. As well as these efforts by the government, companies—which are themselves the mainstay of economic activity—also exerted efforts, including rather drastic restructuring. I believe it is the combination of these efforts by the government and the private sector that has led to the economic recovery we are currently seeing.

So can we now say that there are no further grounds for concern and that the future is rosy for the Japanese economy? In the 1980s, many branches of the US manufacturing industry were surpassed by Japan. Come the 1990s, though, the US had found a way out of the stranglehold through revolutionizing the information technology (IT) industry. What happened, then, was that the US itself became a creator and seized the initiative with this new industry—a paradigm shift. As a result, the US now maintains overwhelming superiority in the global IT industry. Unfortunately, in Japan there is currently no industry that could realistically be considered a contender for a paradigm shift of that magnitude. Certainly the present prosperity is being pulled along by the familiar carthorses of the manufacturing industries, such as automobiles and electronic appliances, and raw material industries, such as steel and glass, along with some of the more established high-tech industries. From this point of view we need the new, next-generation industries, such as IT, biotechnology and nanotechnology, to develop as quickly as possible.

PHOTO RIGHT: KEIZO OKUBO

Since entering the then Economic Planning Agency in 1958, **YUTAKA KOSAI** has worked as an analyst of the Japanese economy. He has taught economics at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, and has served as both President and Chairman of the Japan Center for Economic Research. He was appointed President of Economic and Social Research at the Cabinet Office of the government of Japan from 2003–2005.

Absolutely Art!



A view of the installations *Mekong/Not Scarlet* and *Red Lights* by Cambodian artist, Marine Ky.

Held last year in the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale 2005 was bursting with works of art that starkly reflected the realities of Asia.

As I walked past each exhibition booth, I somehow felt as though I was caught up in some kind of surreal sci-fi novel. Upon reflection, however, I guess this was probably quite apt considering that the theme of this Triennale was "Parallel Realities."

There was the work of Cao Fei from China, who filmed young people hooked on cosplay inside an ever-expanding metropolis and Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries from the Republic of Korea, whose hard-boiled messages synchronized on screen to urban jazz music emphasized the solitude of city life. Effectively the products of the pop MTV culture, these artists are masters of the projected visual image. At the same time, artists such as Deang Buasan from Thailand who pay no heed to trends in modern art were also represented. An obsession with "death" led him to create a delicate painting based upon an image of his young brother who drowned at an early age. Does this pluralism and disorderliness, one wonders, reflect what Asia is all about?

At right is a car by Thai artist Thaweesak Srithongdee. At left a female mascot by Takamasa Sumi from Japan.

PHOTOS: MASATOSHI SAKAMOTO

The Triennale (an international art exhibition held every three years) was held in the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum from September 17 to November 27 last year. This is the third time it has been held, with the first being in 1999, the year the Fukuoka Art Museum opened. The artists were chosen after careful local research by the organizers and, although it was an international exhibition, some of the works on display were actually those of artists making their debuts outside their own countries. At this Triennale, 50 groups and individual artists participated from 21 Asian countries and regions representing an area stretching from Pakistan to Japan.

But is disorderliness actually what Asia is all about? Raiji Kuroda, curator of the Fukuoka Art Museum explains, "The word 'diversity' in any discussion of Asian art has already become a cliché. Exclusive nationalism and fundamentalism has gained momentum since 9/11 and all kinds of conflicts are occurring throughout Asia. In this exhibition we wanted to take a dispassionate look at the situation."

The reality is that in Asia disparate views exist within a parallel reality. However, there is also much positive potential here.

Cambodian artist, Marine Ky, uses art to work with children in various countries. In her installation *Mekong/Not Scarlet* she had children from Cambodia and Myanmar produce a work of art by tying red ribbons to a net used for fishing in the Mekong River. During this Triennale she produced works through numerous workshops held with the children of Fukuoka. Civil war in Cambodia forced her into exile at the age of four, and her experiences back then provided the starting point for her artistic activities involving children that transcend national borders.

When I asked her, "Do you believe that you can change society through art?" she responded with an emphatic, "Absolutely!" She explained, "I mean in ways that are very subtle and not at all direct—people looking at something beautiful and sharing the same appreciation of beauty. Art has the power to connect people in a way that transcends national borders."

The world we live in is full of chaos and destruction, and this exhibition featured many works that served as an abrupt reminder of such cruel realities. Nevertheless, after I left the exhibition hall, I felt that one word, said with such conviction by Marine Ky, remained embedded in my consciousness—"Absolutely!"

— SHIN'ICHI OKADA

KOIZUMI ATTENDS EAST ASIA SUMMIT

From December 11 to 14, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited Malaysia to attend the ASEAN+3 Summit, the ASEAN-Japan Summit and the first East Asia Summit (EAS).

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi left for Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, aboard a government jet, arriving at his destination on the evening of December 11. The following afternoon, the Prime Minister held a meeting with Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The two leaders formally agreed to establish a joint working committee in January 2006 to examine the feasibility of entering into negotiations toward the conclusion of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)+3 (Japan, China and the Republic of Korea) Summit Meeting was then held, and the leaders adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the ASEAN Plus Three Summit. The Declaration announced the common resolve to realize an East Asian community as a long-term goal. At the meeting, Prime Minister Koizumi announced Japan's policy of contributing to the fight against avian and pandemic influenza. The policy embodies a range of measures including providing assistance to Asian countries in the form of the stockpiling of 500,000 courses of antiviral medicines worth US$135 million.

After the summit meeting, Prime Minister Koizumi held a meeting with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam. During the meeting, Prime Minister Koizumi proposed, "When full consideration is given to our close economic relations, we are now reaching the time to start holding preparatory consultations regarding an EPA." Sultan Bolkiah expressed his full agreement.

On the morning of December 13, Prime Minister Koizumi attended the ASEAN-Japan Summit meeting with the leaders of the ASEAN member countries in Kuala

PHOTOS: CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

Facing Page: The opening ceremony of the East Asia Summit.
Below: A scene from the ASEAN+3 Summit.
Right: The official signing ceremony of the Japan-Malaysia EPA.

Lumpur. After the meeting, the Joint Statement of the Ninth ASEAN-Japan Summit, entitled "Deepening and Broadening of the ASEAN-Japan Strategic Partnership" was issued, and both parties declared that they will contribute to the maintenance of peace, security, prosperity and progress in the region on an equal basis. Furthermore, Prime Minister Koizumi announced that Japan will provide fresh financial assistance to the amount of 7.5 billion yen to support ASEAN integration through funds such as the ASEAN Development Fund (ADF).

Koizumi then held individual meetings with Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of the Republic of Singapore, and Prime Minister Helen Clark of New Zealand. During his meeting with Prime Minister Singh, Koizumi remarked on future bilateral relations, and noted, "India is the world's largest democratic nation and possesses great potential." Prime Minister Singh responded, "India's relations with Japan serve a crucial role in our Look East Policy."

Prime Minister Koizumi then held a four-party meeting with Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Prime Minister Bounnhang Vorachith of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. At this meeting, Prime Minister Koizumi pledged to extend new yen loans and grant aid totaling approximately 22 billion yen to the three countries.

Later, Koizumi held talks with Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia at which both leaders signed an EPA and issued a joint declaration.

On the morning of December 14, Prime Minister Koizumi attended the first East Asia Summit (EAS) held in Kuala Lumpur with the leaders of 16 countries: the 10 ASEAN member countries, Japan, China, the Republic of Korea (ROK), India, Australia and New Zealand. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Badawi of Malaysia, and began with an address delivered by President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation, who joined the meeting as a guest. Russia is aiming to become a member country of the EAS.

At the meeting, the leaders agreed to promote economic integration in East Asia and signed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asia Summit, which includes a line stating that the EAS "could play a significant role" in the formation of an East Asian community in the years to come. Furthermore, the leaders adopted an EAS declaration on countermeasures against avian influenza, which has as its pillar the joint stockpiling of antiviral drugs. The EAS will take place annually, with the next meeting scheduled to be held in the Philippines next December.

In the afternoon, Prime Minister Koizumi held a meeting with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. At the meeting, Koizumi officially informed Prime Minister Howard that Japan has decided to extend the dispatch period of the Self-Defense Forces in Iraq engaged in reconstruction assistance by one year. Prime Minister Howard, who has also committed troops to assist in Iraq, welcomed this decision.

Prime Minister Koizumi held a press conference in Kuala Lumpur after a series of meetings, stating, "From now on, at the East Asia Summit meetings, the leaders of the 16 countries, aiming at molding a community in the future, will strengthen cooperation and will be able to jointly tackle various issues. The fact that such a forum is in place will be very meaningful for Japan as well as for ASEAN and for the other countries that newly participated."

— SHIN'ICHI OKADA

An Asian Wind Hits Tokyo

Citizen Dog Director: Wisit Sasanatieng • Thailand • 2004

The 18th Tokyo International Film Festival, Asia's biggest film festival, was held from October 22 to 30 last year. As in previous years, the Winds of Asia category showed the energy and talent of Asian filmmakers.

Slit Eyes Director: Yasmin Ahmad • Malaysia • 2004

What do film directors from different countries talk about when they get together? At the 18th Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF), I heard a Malaysian and a Chinese film director in earnest discussion about the filmmaking process, the former firing questions at the latter: "Your name appears in the credits as the screenwriter, but how far were you actually involved with putting the story together?" "What about the casting?" This exchange was one of many that took place during the Winds of Asia category, which received almost 40 entries. There were many from Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, and also others from East Asian countries and regions including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea.

Of Love and Eggs Director: Garin Nugroho • Indonesia • 2004

"One of the biggest differences from previous years is that there has been a huge increase in the number of entries from Southeast Asian countries, although this was not something we planned deliberately," comments programming director Sozo Teruoka on the Winds of Asia category. "Tickets for some of the Southeast Asian entries that went on sale on the day sold out in no time at all, and there was a real feeling that moviegoers are starting to take more interest than ever in films from this region. Up until recently people have been saying that there is a new wave of films from the Chinese-speaking region or the Republic of Korea, but I think this year's festival is proof that there is currently a new wave coming from Southeast Asia."

As if to emphasize the vitality of Southeast Asian film, the Best Asian Film Award went to *Sepet (Slit Eyes)* by the Malaysian female director Yasmin Ahmad. This was her second work, in which she tells the story of a doomed love affair between a Malaysian girl, who is a fan of the popular Hong Kong movie star Takeshi Kaneshiro, and a Chinese boy who makes a living selling pirated DVDs. The plot itself is indicative of the way the Asian film world is becoming increasingly borderless. Young, independent directors are starting to make their mark in Malaysia, and Teruoka notes that the new trends emerging from this country make it one of the most exciting for film lovers.

Since last year a business market, backed by the Ministry of Trade, Economy and Industry, has been held in conjunction with the TIFF. This market aims at promoting the international development of the film industry within Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. Known as "TIFFCOM2005 Featuring the Asia-Pacific Entertainment Market," the market has provided a valuable opportunity for film professionals from different countries to meet. "At last year's business market a Hong Kong director met a Chinese-American producer – they hit it off with each other, and are now apparently in the process of making a new film together," says Teruoka. In this way, new chances emerge all the time at the business market for bringing Asian talent onto the world stage.

"There is no shortage of international film festivals being held around the world, and it has perhaps not been very clear up until now just what role the TIFF plays among all of them," says Teruoka. "But I think this time round we have brought out a particularly Asian color, and together with the business market, the TIFF has played the important role of finally discovering the new talent in the Asian film world and showing it to a global audience." As the Winds of Asia gather strength, Tokyo seems well on its way to becoming the center of the ever-growing world of Asian film.

Mongolian Ping Pong Director: Ning Hao • China • 2005

– MAYUMI NAKAMURA

PHOTOS: SEIYA KAWAMOTO

TOWARD Mutual Understanding

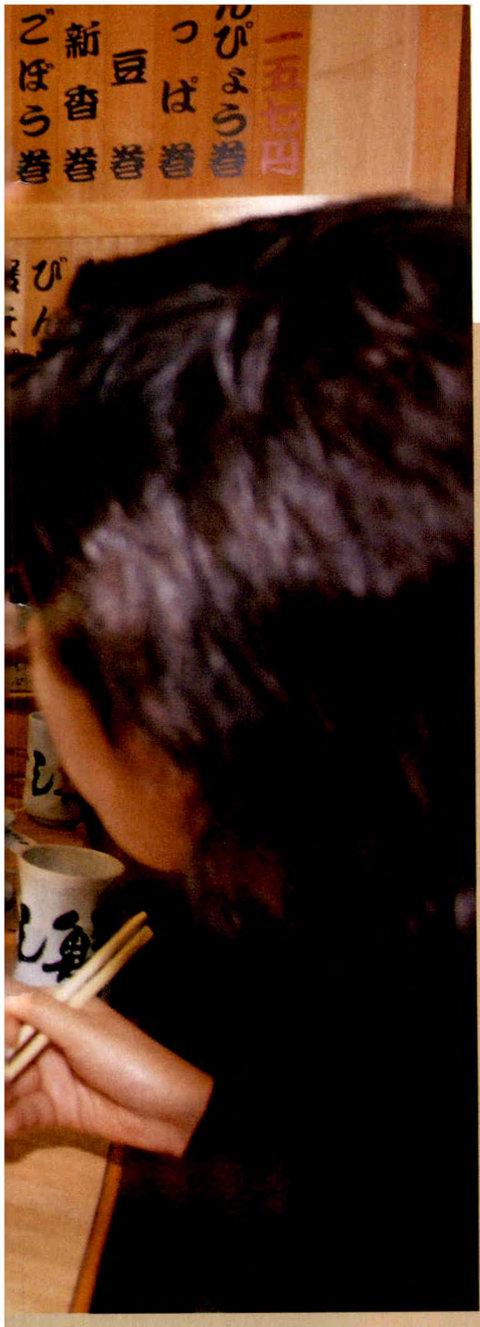
Enjoying a meal at a sushi restaurant near the Tsukiji fish market.

The visitors to the automobile manufacturing plant fired off the sort of high-level questions you might expect from professional engineers: "What is the automation rate of the production line?" "Several different types of cars are made at the same time on the production line, doesn't this cause confusion at the plant?" This was a scene from a visit by a group of young Chinese people to the Nissan Motor Co, Ltd.'s Tochigi Plant in Tochigi Prefecture, some 100 kilometers north of Tokyo, which took place on November 11 last year.

"The automobile industry in China is growing rapidly at the moment, and at the same time there is increasing interest in our country in Japan's highly advanced automobile industry," explains Tian Yu, one of the participants in the visit. Although none of the participants are auto industry specialists, the questions that they ask throughout the visit show that they are certainly keen to learn. "It really means a lot being able to see first hand the sort of advanced technology that Japan is using," enthuses group leader Zhao Ya-qiao, who is also Deputy Director of the International Department, All-China Youth Federation.

The Chinese youths were invited to Japan under the Japan-China Youth Friendship Exchange Program, which aims to deepen mutual understanding and friendship between the youth of the two nations. The program was established in fiscal 1979 by the Prime Minister's Office (now the Cabinet Office) to commemorate the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People's Republic of China the previous year. Since then, exchange visits have been carried out under the program every year.

Last year was the 27th time that exchange visits have been carried out. Under the program the Japanese Youth Goodwill



Twenty-seven young Chinese people visited Japan from November 9 to 27 last year under the 2005 Japan-China Youth Friendship Exchange Program.

Mission to China visited various places in China from September 10 to 28, and the reciprocal visit from China, the Invitation of Chinese Youth to Japan, visited Tokyo and other parts of Japan from November 9 to 27. There were 27 young people in the group from China, who were selected on the basis of recommendations from regional governments and other bodies. They came from a wide variety of fields, and included civil servants, journalists, and managers of IT companies—these are the young people who are expected to play big roles in their respective fields in the future. After arriving in Tokyo on November 9, they attended an official welcome reception hosted by the Cabinet Office. They then had a busy schedule, which included visits to the automobile manufacturing plant, a university and other educational establishments. Their visit also included homestays with Japanese families and other exchange activities. The participants joined in the activities with the energy and enthusiasm one would expect from tomorrow's leaders.

Their efforts went further than the field trips and other training components of the program—they also entered wholeheartedly into exchanges with Japanese youths. On November 12, a Saturday with the clear autumnal skies that show Tokyo at its best, the Chinese youths met with a group of Japanese youths, mostly former Japanese program participants who had been to China, who were giving their support to the visitors from China. Together, the young people toured the main sights of the capital, such as the Nijubashi Bridge in the grounds of the Imperial Palace, the high-tech shopping center of Akihabara, the fish market at Tsukiji and the central Shinjuku district. At Tsukiji, they enjoyed the authentic taste of sushi in one of the area's value-for-money sushi eateries, using the freshest ingredients straight from the fish market known as the "kitchen of Tokyo." On the tour bus the Chinese visitors made lively attempts to converse with their Japanese hosts, mainly through Chinese with a smattering of Japanese and with liberal use of electronic dictionaries and Chinese ideographic characters, which are often similar in Chinese and Japanese.

The following day, November 13, the visiting Chinese youths were joined by around 30 Japanese youths for a discussion. During the course of the discussion, many of the participants emphasized the importance of building on grass-roots level exchanges. "We really cannot say that Sino-Japanese relations are currently progressing smoothly, so I believe that for mutual understanding it is all the more important for the young people from both countries to build 'face-to-face' relations with each other," commented Japanese participant Satomi Hoshino, who visited China in 2005 as a member of the Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission to China.

"Coming to Japan and then actually coming into contact with the openness of the Japanese people has been a fantastic opportunity for us to deepen our understanding of this country," said Chinese program participant Zhang Xiao-bing in response. "There are 1.3 billion Chinese people and 120 million Japanese people, so those of us taking part in this program are just a drop in the ocean. Nonetheless, I think the circle of friendship that has been born from this opportunity will be a foundation on which to build solid, lasting relations between our two countries."

— TADAHIRO OHKOSHI

A visit to Nissan's Tochigi production plant.

Cosmetic Spaces

Beauty journalist, Mayumi Kurata, introduces several unique spaces which help support Japanese women in their quest for beauty.

Cosmetics are, essentially, a kind of everyday luxury item. However, for many Japanese women the act of beautifying oneself now encompasses so much more than a simple body care or a beauty routine. To this end, spaces which are created as a type of 'beauty amusement park' are popping up all over the country, offering women a place to both enjoy 'getting pretty' and gain a sense of satisfaction from the act of pampering themselves.

One such 'beauty space' is a combination boutique/spa featuring multiple cosmetics sales counters and manicure/aesthetic treatment booths under a single roof. Facilities of this type are often packed with young women on weekends and evenings, and some have their appointment books filled up months in advance.

Hot springs spas aimed at the health- and beauty-conscious crowd are also increasingly popular. Many feature so-called 'bedrock baths' or germanium baths, which improve metabolism and detoxify the body by inducing perspiration. Some accomplished users of these spas—which are often open quite late—visit after a hard night's work of overtime at the office to refresh themselves before returning home to tumble directly into bed.

Many large hotels opened within the last few years now feature a luxurious spa or aesthetic room on the premises. Some hotels offer special rates on a night's stay and spa treatment, and not a few single women guests take advantage of these packages to enjoy a brief respite from their stressful daily lives.

In an attempt to recover from a dramatic decline in visitors after the collapse of the economic bubble, even some of Japan's oldest and most prestigious traditional hot spring inns have taken to constructing new private outdoor baths or aesthetic rooms to attract female guests. Beauty, it seems, is a vital keyword for a variety of establishments hoping to attract more customers.

Beauty is also an emerging trend in the medical field. Using new knowledge and technology derived from pharmaceuticals, cosmetics have evolved over the past decade to deliver even more beautifying effects and functionality. Meanwhile, a new type of medical specialty for optional treatment has emerged called 'cosmetic dermatology.' In brightly-lit, stylish offices which resemble aesthetic salons, patients can receive relatively low-risk treatments to solve skin problems that cannot be cleared up with cosmetics alone, including topical treatments, irradiation, injections and other methods. Techniques of this type differ from conventional cosmetic surgery in that no scalpel is used, and such treatments are proving very popular and being widely used.

> "...cosmetics have evolved over the past decade to deliver even **more beautifying effects and functionality.**"

One survey revealed that while only around 10% of respondents had actually undergone procedures such as chemical peels or photofacials, nearly 70% indicated that they had an interest in the treatments, or would like to try them. Even university hospitals, which for a long time held a negative opinion of medical treatment for the purpose of beautification or rejuvenation, have started offering cosmetic dermatology or 'anti-aging' consultations on an outpatient basis. Furthermore, Shiseido, one of Japan's best-known cosmetics manufacturers, entered the cosmetic dermatology-related product market in November 2005, with the aim of creating synergy between cosmetics and pharmaceutical businesses. The fields of medicine and beauty seem to be getting closer all the time.

Cosmetic dermatologists also offer full evaluations of a patient's skin condition in terms of appearance and aging from a medical perspective, much like the free analysis given at makeup counters in major department stores. Some doctors even specialize as beauty general practitioners, offering patients comprehensive advice regarding not only skin care methods, but also their diet, vitamins and supplements, and exercise.

It appears that beauty, and its pursuit, will occupy a special place in the hearts of Japanese women for many years to come.

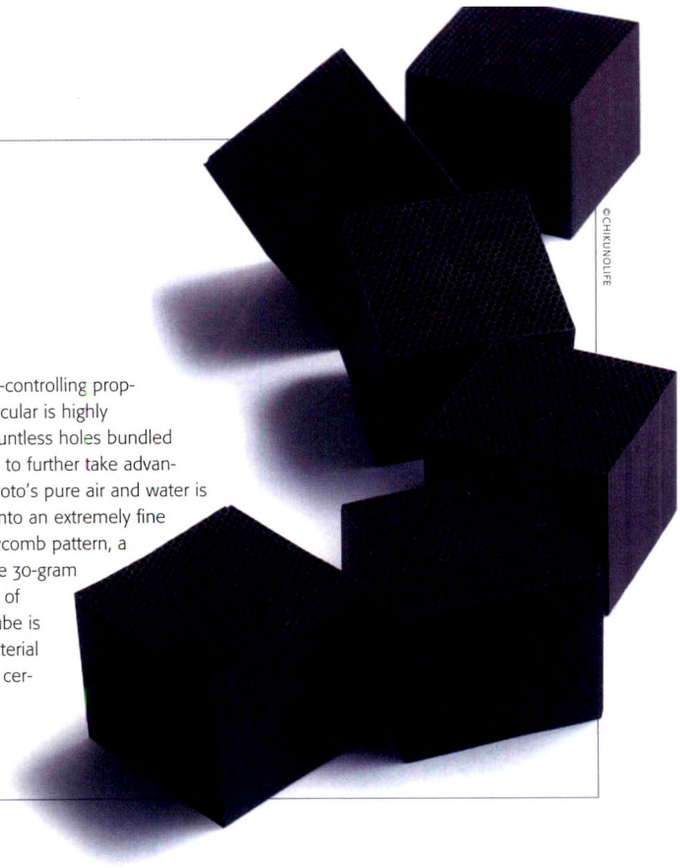
A beauty journalist for more than 20 years, **MAYUMI KURATA** currently writes for the beauty sections in women's magazines and a national newspaper.

Nail treatment at the Beauty Mall Excite—a beauty "theme park" catering to all possible tastes in beauty.

PHOTO: TAKAHIRO SAKUMA

Clean Air Bamboo

Charcoal's air-purifying, deodorizing, and humidity-controlling properties are widely known. Bamboo charcoal in particular is highly absorbent given its structure, which resembles countless holes bundled into tiny pipes. The *Chikuno Cube* was developed to further take advantage of these characteristics. Bamboo grown in Kyoto's pure air and water is burned to make charcoal, which is then crushed into an extremely fine powder. The powder is then molded into a honeycomb pattern, a shape which maximizes its various properties. One 30-gram *Chikuno Cube* is just as effective as ten kilograms of bamboo charcoal. The environmentally friendly cube is also biodegradable. While using a plant-based material is itself aesthetically pleasing, the cube shape will certainly make the *Chikuno Cube* a perfect complement to any modern interior.



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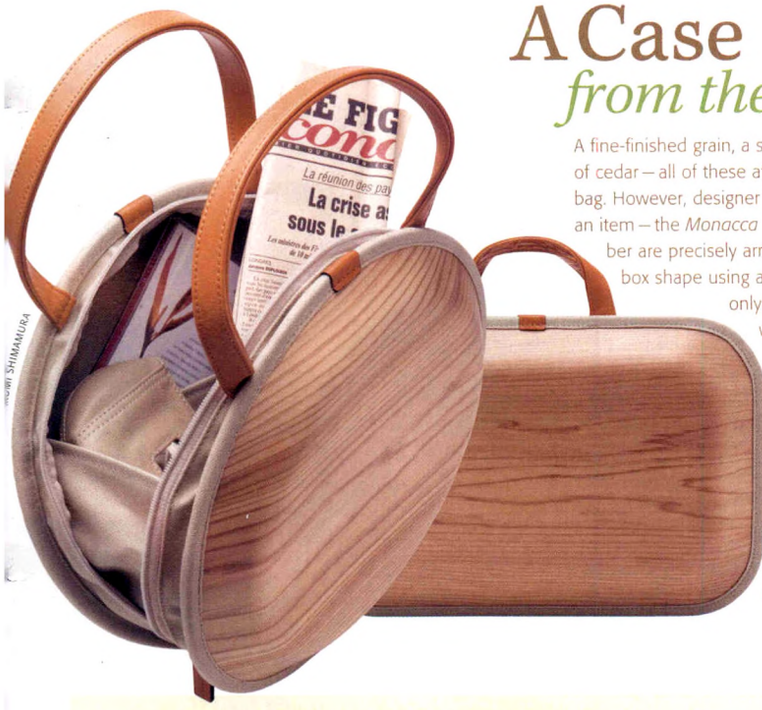
High Quality Handset

Everyone has a different set of criteria when selecting a mobile phone handset. One new handset likely to appeal to buyers with discriminating tastes is the NTT DoCoMo *FOMA-P701iD*, released in autumn 2005. Born out of a collaboration between graphic designer Taku Sato and Panasonic, the handset has a deceptively simple exterior, but is actually quite dynamic – a tri-colored LED lights up in a ring-like wave pattern when a phone call or e-mail is received. The phone also includes an audio player capable of around five hours of playback time. The handset, a 2005 Good Design Award winner, was recognized for its reworking of all aspects of a mobile phone as a communication tool – from the body shape to its one-of-a-kind interface. *FOMA-P701iD* truly reconsiders the concept of a mobile phone, and achieves a simple, basic handset with the focus is not on its specifications, but on the object itself.



©SHIMAMURA

A Case *from the Forest*

A fine-finished grain, a soft, pleasant texture, and the delicious scent of cedar – all of these attributes are not usually associated with a bag. However, designer Takumi Shimamura has created just such an item – the *Monacca "Bag."* Cedar panels cut from thinned timber are precisely arranged and formed into the unique curved box shape using a special press. Even the heaviest bag weighs only 790 grams, and is so light it actually floats in water. Each bag boasts a different wood grain and cut, creating a truly original type of bag. Ecoasu Umajimura, a third-sector public entity in Kochi Prefecture, manufactures and sells the bags as part of a project to reuse wood from timber thinned in local forests. A portion of proceeds from the bag are 'given back' to the forest through donations to the 'Thousand Year Forest Fund,' which is dedicated to replenishing forest resources.

X-COLOR: GRAFFITI IN JAPAN EXHIBITION

Graffiti, or the writing of words or pictures on building exteriors with spray paint, was a vital part of youth culture in 1970s New York. Graffiti has since spread to cities all over the world, and many appear to have developed their own original style. Japan is no exception, and the country's unique graffiti style was highlighted at the X-Color: Graffiti in Japan exhibition held from October 1st through December 4th, 2005, at the Art Tower Mito in Mito, Ibaraki. The exhibition chronicled Japan's graffiti subculture from its inception to the present through photographs and images, while introducing the works of some 38 domestic graffiti artists. The works were contained not only within the museum itself *(see photo)*, but also on nearby construction site guard rails, building walls and parking areas. For the two-month duration of the exhibition, the city of Mito was awash in graffiti – for artistic purposes, of course!

WORKS: CAR (KANE); WALL (AMES); (RACK) • PHOTOS: TSUYOSHI SATO

GOVERNMENT

Youth Ship Participants Visit Koizumi

CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi recently received a courtesy visit from those young people from the Asian region who are currently taking part in the Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Program. The courtesy visit was held at the Prime Minister's Official Residence on December 19.

The Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Program originated as a joint project between Japan and the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states in 1974, and has proved immensely successful over the years. Several of the participants of early programs have since gone on to attain prominent positions in both the public and private sectors in their respective countries, and many of them were able to gain a very positive image of Japan through their participation in the Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Program.

The program takes place on an annual basis, and the program currently underway is the 32nd of its kind. The structure of the program involves some 300 young participants from the ten ASEAN member states, who join up with around 40 young participants chosen from across Japan. Those taking part in the program visit various countries in the Southeast Asian region aboard the Ship for Southeast Asian Youth. During their approximately 50 days together, the participants share onboard experiences and engage in a variety of activities both aboard ship and in the countries they visit. These activities help to deepen mutual understanding between young people from Southeast Asian countries and Japan, and go a long way toward the establishing of lasting friendships—both at national and individual levels.

After shaking hands and exchanging a few words of greeting with each of the participants, Prime Minister Koizumi delivered a message that both welcomed and encouraged them in their future endeavors. "I very much hope that all of you will make the most of this valuable experience and do everything you can toward the development of your own respective countries. I also hope that this experience will help toward establishing a deeper and long lasting friendship with Japan," he said.

Expo Spirit Lives On

The Expo 2005 Aichi, held over the six-month period of March to September 2005, is now over. But initiatives related to its main theme of "Nature's Wisdom" and one of its sub-themes, "Recycling Society" continue unabated. For example, in an attempt to encourage the recycling of such materials as the bamboo, wall surface greenery and biomass used in the government-sponsored Japan Pavilion, a tour was conducted before its disassembly in which initial bids were taken for the sale of reusable materials. Other pavilions are also doing their best to minimize waste by moving some of their facilities to theme parks or holding auctions of exhibited items. It is to be hoped that the underlying ethos of the Expo 2005 Aichi that attracted participation from more than 120 countries and international organizations and was visited by 22 million people will continue on into the future.

By explaining the spirit behind the Expo 2005 Aichi, initiatives that will impact upon our future are being carried out to help find solutions to global problems.

COOL BIZ Collection 2006

YUICHI ITABASHI

On December 8, the Ministry of the Environment held the "COOL BIZ Collection 2006," a fashion show introducing the 2006 summer range of cool and comfortable business attire. The previous summer, the Ministry launched a national campaign under the banner of "Team Minus Six Percent" to counter global warming and achieve Japan's greenhouse gas reduction target of 6% below 1990 levels by 2012 as stipulated in the Kyoto Protocol. The campaign calling for office air-conditioning units to be set at 28°C will run again this year.

Five clothing manufacturers cooperated in providing garments. Employees of the corporations and organizations regis-

tered with "Team Minus Six Percent," as well as actors, TV presenters and company presidents took to the catwalk as models for the fashion show. Emphasizing no-neckties and a cool and comfortable approach to business attire, not only is COOL BIZ friendly to the environment and the wearer, but it is expected to have a positive economic ripple effect by boosting consumer spending on clothing. Let's hope that it has found its niche in Japanese summer business attire.

UNESCO Hails Kabuki

AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Japanese performing art of kabuki (as performed in its traditional style) was named among the third UNESCO announcement of new Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritages of Humanity. UNESCO proclaimed kabuki as one of 43 new masterpieces on November 25 after a jury deliberated on 64 nominations from all over the world.

Every other year since 2001 UNESCO has released a Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritages of Humanity. In 2003, UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Representative List of intangible cultural assets such as ethnic cultural practices, folklore and oral traditions has been compiled in order to foster the view that this intangible heritage is shared by all humanity and should be safeguarded. Kabuki has its roots in early 17th century Kyoto and is perhaps the most internationally renowned and best loved of all Japan's traditional performing arts. It is the third intangible heritage from Japan to be included on the list, following *nogaku* theater—which has a history stretching back to the 14th century—in the first Proclamation in 2001, and the popular *ningyo joruri bunraku* puppet theater in 2003.

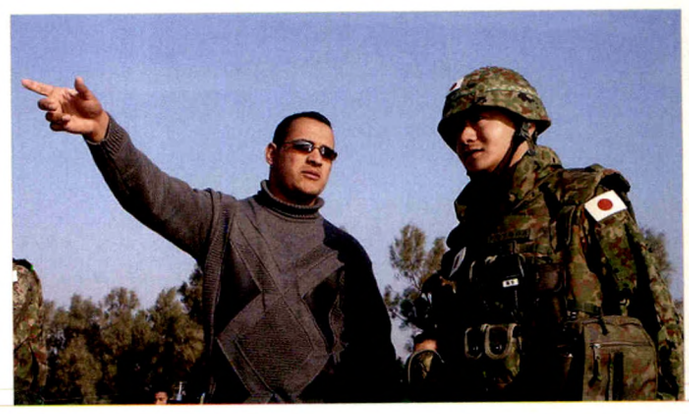
Invigorating Distribution in Asia

On November 15, 2005, the Cabinet approved the Comprehensive Distribution Measures Framework (2005-2009). In recent years the circumstances surrounding distribution have been greatly affected by expanded economic exchange in the East Asian region, enhanced and strengthened environmental measures following the Kyoto Protocol coming into effect and increased security to counter terrorism. Rapid and precise distribution measures are required to cope with these changes. This framework has four goals for the creation of a comprehensive and integrated distribution system by 2009. The first goal is that it be inexpensive, speedy and seamless both inside and outside Japan. Secondly, that it be environmentally friendly. Thirdly, that it is efficient and demand-driven. Finally, that it be a distribution system that takes into full account the safety and security of the people of Japan. This will require cargo and distribution companies, relevant local groups as well as related government ministries and agencies to strengthen links and deepen cooperative working relationships.

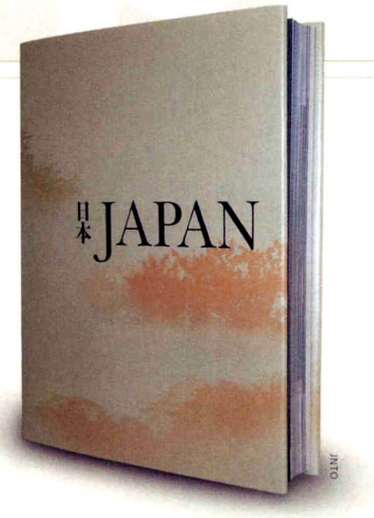
SDF Extends Stay in Iraq

On December 8, the Japanese Government revised the Basic Plan of measures based on the Special Measures Law on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq to allow the Self Defense Forces (SDF) to continue its role for one more year. This occurred ahead of the Iraqi National Assembly election on December 15 and was in keeping with the UN Security Council adoption of a resolution to extend the mandate of the Multinational Forces (MNF). This second extension of SDF activities in Iraq means that the SDF will continue its activities in Iraq until December 14, 2006.

Mindful that the option exists to withdraw if necessary, the SDF will carry out its duties while monitoring the Iraqi political process, the local security situation and the activities of the MNF. In the press conference following the Cabinet decision, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi stated, "I would like to see a situation created as soon as possible in which the safety and security of Iraq is improved by the efforts of the Iraqi people themselves."



"Japan" Photo Collection



A compilation of photographs entitled "Japan" has been released by the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO). The main use of the photo collection will be as a gift for Japanese government officials and business leaders to present to their hosts when they embark on official overseas visits, and as a commemorative gift for foreign dignitaries visiting Japan. The collection contains 330 pages and is made up of three separate photographic sections: "Natural Beauty," "Tradition and Cultural Heritage" and "Urban Scenery-Modern Life." All 47 prefectures are represented among the 264 photographs, which feature all of Japan's World Heritage Sites and national parks.

The Japanese government is currently promoting the "Visit Japan Campaign" designed to realize the target of attracting 10 million foreign tourists to visit Japan by the year 2010. Although this collection of photographs does not contain information on Japan in the form of text, it is nevertheless the perfect vehicle for conveying the stunning visual beauty of the Japanese archipelago to the world.

First Seabed Samples from Deep Earth Exploration Vessel "Chikyu"

The Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) announced on December 14 that its deep earth exploration vessel, "Chikyu" (approximately 57,000 tonnes), collected its first drilling samples from the seabed.

Completed in July 2005, Chikyu is now carrying out tests to confirm the ship's performance. It is theoretically capable of drilling 7,000 meters below the seabed in water as deep as 2,500 meters. The seabed samples gathered on this occasion were gained from a depth of 1,200 meters, some 60 kilometers off the coast of Aomori Prefecture. The stratum 50 and 70 meters beneath the seabed was found to contain an olive-colored diatomite mudstone with layers of volcanic ash. Because mudstone traps organic matter, it is feasible that it has an impact on the density of the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and the ocean, and therefore may even be related to climate change. Analyzing these samples may make it possible to create a record of climatic change in the Aomori region in 100 year intervals going back as far as two or three hundred thousand years. Chikyu will continue its shipboard research and analysis trials based on these initial samples.

KOIZUMI CABINET *e-mail magazine*

The weekly Koizumi Cabinet E-mail Magazine is available free of charge in English to subscribers. Each issue contains a message from Prime Minister Koizumi and other information about the government.

FOR SUBSCRIPTION INFO ➤

http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/m-magazine/index.html

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS:

➤ *December 1*

Prime Minister Koizumi noted that he had been able to decide on policies for such outstanding reforms as government-related financial organizations and the medical system. He also commented on the magnificent record set by sumo wrestler Asashoryu and on the outstanding achievements of other foreign-born sumo wrestlers.

➤ *December 8*

This week Koizumi met with Prime Minister Al Ja'fari of the Iraqi Transitional Government, who expressed his gratitude for Japan's humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq. Koizumi pledged that Japan would continue to provide assistance for the realization of peace and stability in Iraq in cooperation with the international community.

➤ *December 15*

This week Koizumi attended the ASEAN+3 Summit Meeting and the first East Asia Summit (EAS). He held individual meetings and exchanged views on a wide array of topics with the leaders of Vietnam, Brunei, Indonesia, India, Singapore, New Zealand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Australia.

➤ *December 22*

This week's message began with a reflection on the past year, which included the immediate aftermath of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, the unexpected dissolution of the Diet and the general election that enabled Koizumi to advance the postal privatization law. He concluded by wishing all his readers a pleasant and happy New Year.

United We Stand

A restructuring program aimed at merging smaller municipalities into larger local bodies has met with great success.

Faced with the prospect of an aging population, a declining birthrate and the consequent depletion of national tax revenues, Japan has set a decentralization policy into motion to wean local governments off subsidies and improve their fiscal health. The program has taken on a new urgency under the restructuring initiatives of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who has extended a range of incentives to help smooth the process of the consolidation of cities, towns and villages. The ultimate goal of his trinity reform package – state subsidies, tax sources and local allocation taxes – is aimed at meeting the needs of the nation as it faces the difficulties of coping with an aging society – 35.7% of Japan's population is expected to be over 65 years by 2050.

"Since the restructuring plan was first launched in 1999, it has centered on merging cities, towns and villages. We expect to complete the program in the next five years," says Akio Mochizuki, deputy director at the Municipal Merger Promotion Division at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Mochizuki explains that the promotion of mergers has worked well. Official data indicates that as of March 31, 2005, consolidation had resulted in 2,521 municipalities, down from 3229 in 1999. By 2006, that number is expected to reach 1,822. The overall target is to achieve 1,000 municipalities in Japan.

"Most towns and cities appear to recognize that consolidation will benefit them as the population continues to shrink and funds from the central government dry up," says Mochizuki.

Japan's municipalities have risen admirably to the challenge of the new scheme. Local mayors are coming up with ingenious ideas that are not only helping to revive their economies but turning Japan into a country of fascinating ideas and progr that illustrate the rise of a rich local culture.

Take for instance the birth of various new 'local currencies signed to reduce public welfare costs shouldered by munici ties. The new currency system, which applies only to resic living in the newly merged municipality, is based on a sy whereby people do volunteer activities and receive coupons can be exchanged for products in local shops. For exan *gozasse* is a new currency printed for residents in Nomi, a created last February through the merger of three local munic ities in Ishikawa Prefecture. The popular gozasse – meaning ' come" in the local dialect – can be acquired by local resic who undertake such community services as driving elderly pe to the doctor or teaching a class. Volunteers are then pai gozasse coupons which can be used to buy products in 41 d ent stores and other facilities in Nomi. The project was appr by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Tran as a model case for the revitalization of cities.

Another case in point is Kumejima Tow Okinawa Prefecture, which was born out o merger of three local municipalities in 2004. To brate the merger, the new town held a mara race which has proved so popular that it has bec an annual fixture drawing hundreds of particip from around Japan. A further boost to the local e omy has been the creation of a professional bas training camp that also attracts a host of vis eager to catch a glimpse of their favorite stars i tion. In yet another move, Katsuragi City in Prefecture – a consolidation of three smaller tov is now marketing plum jam and ice cream after ditional liquor store cooperated with residents b nating its highly-prized plums to produce the local goodies.

Of course, mergers have not been completely pain Problems arose when deciding on new names for me towns and the sharing of resources between municipalities success stories also abound; a string of mergers in Hiros Prefecture resulted in 86 municipalities in 1999 being wh down to just 23 in 2005. "We have seen that winning th proval of local mayors can be achieved through patient exp tions that clearly state the benefits of consolidation and re their fears toward change," Mochizuki points out.

Text by **SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI**, a freelance journalist from Sri Lanka based in Tokyo

KAICHIRO MORIKAWA

NEARLY TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE JAPANESE SUB-CULTURE BASED ON ANIME AND GAMES FIRST BECAME KNOWN AS "OTAKU CULTURE." THE DEGREE OF ATTENTION THAT OTAKU CULTURE HAS ATTRACTED FROM OVERSEAS IS INCREASING, AS EVIDENCED BY THE HOLDING OF THE WORLD COSPLAY SUMMIT IN JAPAN LAST YEAR. UP AND COMING ARCHITECTURAL THEORIST, KAICHIRO MORIKAWA, TALKS ABOUT THE SOCIETAL INFLUENCE OF OTAKU CULTURE.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOSHIYUKI SASHO

KAICHIRO MORIKAWA SPECIALIZES IN DESIGN THEORY AND WAS COMMISSIONED TO DESIGN THE JAPANESE PAVILION AT THE 9TH VENICE BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION. HE CHOSE THE THEME "OTAKU: persona = space = city," AND EVOKED A HUGE RESPONSE BY REPRODUCING THE UNIQUE NATURE OF AKIHABARA, WHERE GEOGRAPHICAL TENDENCIES IN TASTE AND PERSONA HAVE TRANSFORMED THE AREA. AT PRESENT, HE IS A VISITING PROFESSOR AT KUWASAWA DESIGN SCHOOL AS WELL AS A RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AT WASEDA UNIVERSITY.

YOU WERE COMMISSIONED TO DESIGN THE JAPANESE PAVILION AT THE 2004 VENICE BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION. AS THE THEME FOR THE JAPANESE PAVILION YOU CHOSE *"OTAKU."* HOW IS IT THAT ARCHITECTURE AND OTAKU LINK TOGETHER?

The Venice Biennial is a like an artistic Olympics with over 100 years of history. Its International Arts Exhibition is well renowned, while the International Architecture Exhibition provides pavilions in which each participating country can exhibit aspects of its culture. Leading architects are chosen to represent their countries and to show their latest works in the form of models and drawings. As the name suggests, this splendid and authoritative gathering is held every other year.

In contrast, when we think of otaku, some will have an image of people who immerse themselves in *anime* or games, and somehow lack a sense of sociability. Those interested in otaku culture are often thought of as plump, pasty people and indifferent to fashion. Their rooms are often full of personal computers, with videos and *manga* piled up, and this can conjure up a somewhat negative image of their personalities and lifestyles.

The contrast between the world of otaku perceived like this and an avant-garde architecture festival, seems to me far from unrelated, although they may appear to be opposites. Yet, there is a link between them. This can be found in the Akihabara district of Tokyo.

BUT, THE AKIHABARA DISTRICT IS WELL KNOWN FOR BEING THE CENTER OF TOKYO'S ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES MARKET.

What caught my attention in Akihabara was the otaku influence rather than the better-known electronic appliance shops. People who were interested in otaku started to gather in the area in the 1990s, and Akihabara gained a reputation as the world center of otaku culture. I used to go to the area as a consumer, when Akihabara was gradually developing otaku culture. Specialist shops devoted to themes within the otaku genre started to appear, and I thought it was a natural transformation. However, when I looked at this from the standpoint of my expertise in architecture and town planning theory, I realized that a new phenomenon was occurring.

Panasonic

Town planning theory in Tokyo was in fashion in the 1980s. The focus at that time was on the Shibuya district which became the main center for youth culture. I tried to compare the changes that had taken place in Shibuya in the 1980s, with the sudden change in Akihabara in the 1990s.

Naturally, the background to a town's rapid change of appearance depends upon the intentions of big companies and administrators. In the case of Shibuya, large railway companies had bought up land, block by block, and lined the streets with affiliated shops, which produced an effect rather like a theme park. However, as I investigated further, it became clear that there had been no such plan in the Akihabara district. No big companies or local administrators planned to have an "otaku street," this change happened naturally.

SO-CALLED "SPECIALIST STREETS" THAT SEE A GATHERING TOGETHER OF SHOPS IN A SIMILAR TRADE HAVE EXISTED SINCE ANCIENT TIMES IN JAPAN AND ELSEWHERE. IS THIS CASE DIFFERENT?

It is clearly different. For example, there is a concentration of secondhand bookshops in the Jinbo-cho district of Tokyo. These shops did not come together because there were people there who liked books, rather the shops attracted people to come who had a similar interest. In the case of Akihabara, the gathering together of otaku personae was occurring when there were hardly any shops devoted to otaku culture, and the otaku-related shops set up in Akihabara as a response to this. In other words, the street changed by following the pattern of people's personae and tastes, which is a new form of town theory. Therefore, I have termed Akihabara as a "personapolis" or a "capital of interests."

WHY WAS IT THAT FANS OF OTAKU CULTURE HAD AN EYE ON AKIHABARA BEFORE IT BECAME THIS CAPITAL OF INTERESTS?

These people did not have an eye on Akihabara because there was something there; rather they started to go there precisely because of what was not there. It was not an area full of fashionable boutiques and restaurants, nor of cafes crowded with couples. The electronics district of Akihabara, despite being in the center of Tokyo, lacked that kind of fashionable atmosphere. There were otaku-style shops dotted around the Shibuya area, however otaku followers often had to find their way there under the contemptuous gaze of the majority in the area. For this reason, Akihabara was a much more comfortable environment, and could become a kind of sanctuary for fans of otaku who felt alienated from the commercially based culture of the fashionable districts of society. The contrast was quite profound.

At the same time, the changes taking place in the electronics markets of Akihabara accelerated these movements. Once, families were the main customers for the electrical appliances sold in the area, but the development of suburban shops meant that this market declined. In the 1990s, the market shifted massively toward personal computers as the main products. As a result, the customer base narrowed very much toward young men who are interested in computers, and this meant that there was a polarization of the type and character of the people visiting the area. While we cannot say definitely that this polarization triggered change in Akihabara, people with an interest in personal computers also tend to like games and anime. Accordingly, a number of electrical appliance stores were replaced by specialist shops dealing in goods

that would appeal to the new clientele. Gradually, signboards and posters of animated pictures of cute girls began to appear on the main streets. Those otaku interests which had once been kept hidden away in private rooms were now beginning to redecorate the city scene in public as people with similar tastes gathered together.

IS THIS CAPITAL OF INTERESTS THAT WE SEE IN AKIHABARA GROWING STRONGER EVEN TODAY?

The number of specialist shops in the otaku genre is still increasing. However, I think that the biggest change is that since 2003 the media has been reporting that Akihabara seems to be changing. Until then, the changes were only obvious to those who regularly visited the area, while the general population was not aware of what was going on.

This change originated from the publicity that the anime industry received after the Hayao Miyazaki animation *Spirited Away* won an Academy Award in 2003. The industries that Japan had promoted consistently since the Second World War in order to earn foreign currency were technologically intensive, such as steel, cars and electrical appliances. The production of manga, anime and video games were not recognized in the same way as mainstream industries and were often criticized by parent-teacher associations and others as being responsible for the deterioration in young people's conduct. It was unthinkable to spend taxpayer's money on the nurturing and support of anime studies or game companies.

However, figures produced since the Academy Award was won

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAIYODO

in 2003, show that the scale of the Japanese-made anime-related business in the United States has reached 520 billion yen, which is three times greater than the sum achieved by steel exports. This surprised the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, which has added anime to the examples of its "new industry creation strategy." In this way, otaku culture as represented by anime began to gain acceptance in the mainstream, and Akihabara started to become the focus of huge media attention.

IF OTAKU CULTURE HAS GAINED ACCEPTANCE IN THIS WAY, THEN THESE PEOPLE SHOULD NO LONGER FEEL THE STIGMA THAT HAS BEEN ATTACHED TO THEM IN THE PAST. IS THIS THE CASE?

Not really. We have to draw a line between otaku and mania. Otaku is not simply a mania that is obsessive about anime, games, manga and other otaku favorite pastimes. Those with a mania for something are usually pleased if their own tastes became approved as part of mainstream culture. However, as soon as manga and anime showed signs of being recognized by the general public, otaku constructed even more sub-genres. These involved such things as featuring more erotica in manga, anime and games in an effort to distance itself from mainstream culture. A trip to the Akihabara district will show the visitor how erotic images and the sexual practices of young women are now a major feature of otaku culture.

Otaku fans don't just like anime and games per se, but like anime and games that will not appeal to the mainstream. Acceptance by mainstream society is seen by fans of otaku as distinctly 'uncool.' However, this does not mean that low quality is acceptable. They adopt a very defensive posture toward the dominant mainstream culture, and this attitude can be seen in many of the characteristics of otaku fans and the capital of their interests in Akihabara.

"NO BIG COMPANIES OR LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS PLANNED TO HAVE AN 'OTAKU STREET,' THIS CHANGE HAPPENED NATURALLY."

This is even clearer when we look at Akihabara and Shibuya as mirrors set against each other. Although only 30 minutes apart on the main Yamanote Line train, which runs around the center of Tokyo, the people who frequent these two districts are very different. In Akihabara, plump, stocky young people carrying rucksacks on their backs look at video games outside the shops, while in Shibuya, fashionable youth with bleached hair stride along the streets talking into their mobile phones. Although they are all Japanese, they appear to be completely different breeds of people, and these differences also influence the town design itself. In Akihabara, the buildings have less window space and are often opaque. In contrast, the buildings in Shibuya tend to use more glass and are more transparent. People who go to Akihabara are confined to an artificial world of the imagination, surrounded by things and trying to shut out the outside world. In contrast, those who frequent the Shibuya district see themselves as the 'beautiful people' and go to see and be seen.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO EXHIBIT THE WORLD AT THE VENICE BIENNIAL?

I reproduced related subjects, which i "Otaku Rooms" and the "Comic Market," gather in otaku festivals, "Akihabara" and lated themes represented the process of ring into one section of town space in architectural exhibition, I wanted to show formed a new town or city space in Japan culture as such. It was not the power of pc was the focus, but the fact that human in power for change in a particular area. Tc edge, we have never seen this in huma wanted people from all over the world to k

There were some interesting reactions f at the exhibition. When looking at the e Pavilion, some said, "How I envy you! European towns with their abundance buildings, rows of houses and stores, can parison with Tokyo and its repeated scra appear messy.

However, European towns may appeal t young people who live there, they are stre over hundreds of years. For them, lookin show rapid change in Akihabara based on ple there, made them feel envious.

WHAT AN INTERESTING REACTION! WHY IS IT THAT THE POWER OF INTERESTS CAN AND HAVE A BIG INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY?

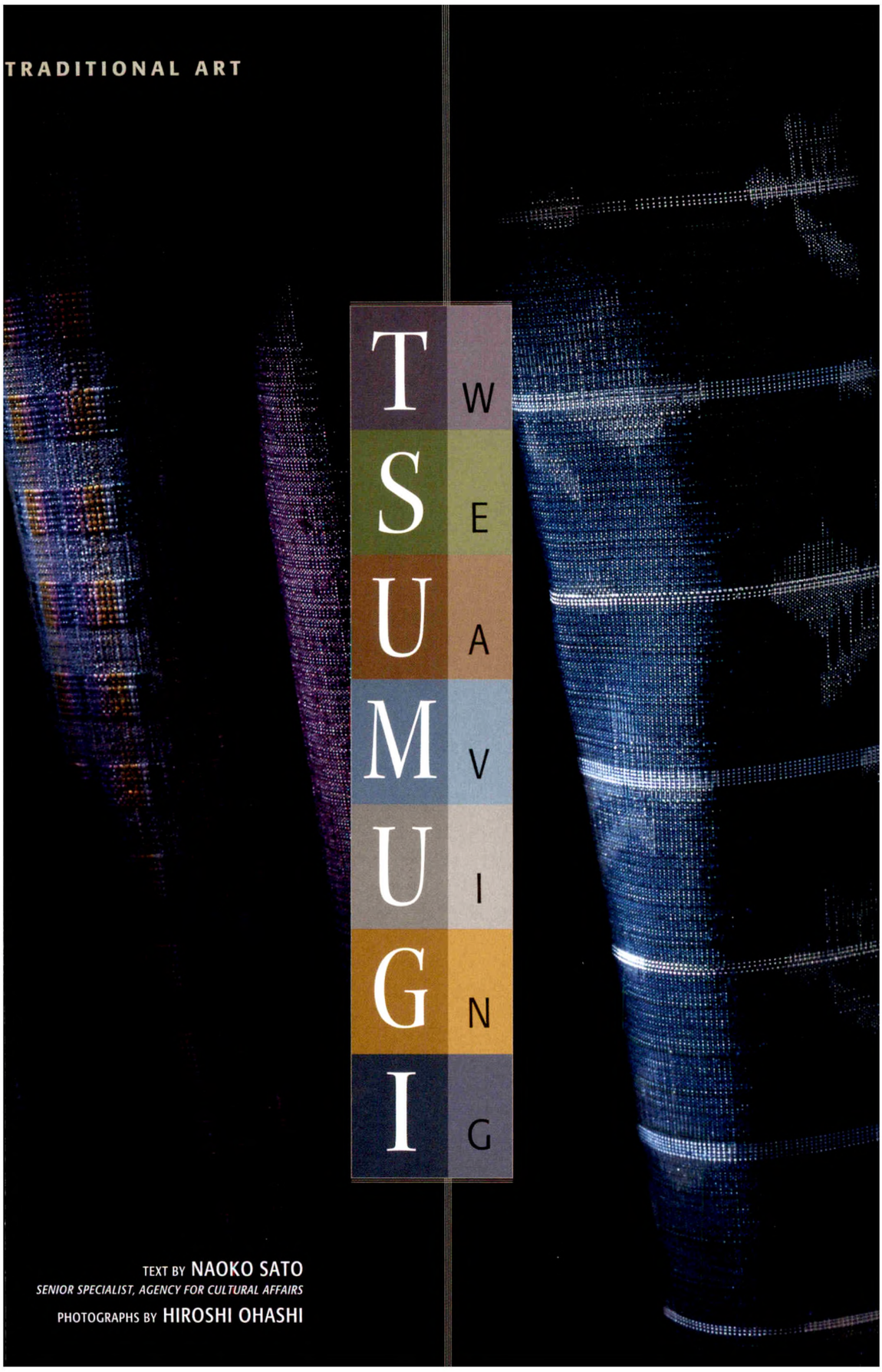
I think that the power of the Internet is ve look at the Internet, the sites are formed ter, not by function. Up to now, the worl the real world as its model and the equip simulation. In other words, the virtual wc nate to the real world. Now, however, wit Internet, the roles have been reversed.

On the Internet, those with their own v free to do just as they choose, rather like t sonal domain. Obviously, cyber space is r that appear there. And the power of the puter field are influencing the reality that and not simply imitating that reality. In fa beginning to imitate the virtual world through these interests. As the power of lieve interests will become an even bigger tion of society around the world.

IN SOME SENSES, GLOBALIZATION CAN BE SEEN RISING CULTURES. IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY TH THIS TREND IN THE FUTURE?

I don't think so. The anti-establishment of itself as 'cool.' Otaku fans react excessiv of the world thinks is cool and fashion otaku culture is capable of changing soci motely interested in doing so. We shoul thing from otaku, because expectation its the otaku.

TRADITIONAL ART



TSUMUGI

WEAVING

TEXT BY **NAOKO SATO**
SENIOR SPECIALIST, AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **HIROSHI OHASHI**

THE BLEND OF COLORS

in the cloth does seem familiar somehow... It turns out that they are the pleasant result of dyes extracted from plants in the garden and from trees in the surrounding area. Magnolia, gardenia, Japanese stone oak, laurel and hackberry—these familiar plants provide a gentle palette of colors for the array of flower and bird motifs scattered across the fabric. An entire world is crafted in the soft folds of this single kimono. Both those who see the kimono and those who wear it are enveloped in its tranquil mood. The craftsperson who made this dreamworld a reality is Sonoko Sasaki, the designated Holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property of *tsumugi* weaving.

Tsumugi originally referred to a sturdy hand-woven cloth made of silk floss drawn from waste silk cocoons and spun into a slubbed thread. Sasaki has developed her own style, combining the natural simplicity inherent in tsumugi fabric with the techniques of traditional *e-gasuri,* or ikat with pictorical patterns.

Sasaki's work does not have even the slightest hint of overbearing colors or pushy patterns. Rather, the soft colors yielded by the plant-based dyes have a natural depth. The feel of the tsumugi weave and the decorative motifs—also plants and flowers drawn from the natural world—quietly capture the hearts of people who wear Sasaki's creations as well as those who see them. However, a closer investigation of her work reveals a refinement supported by a highly honed technique, and an accompanying sense of disciplined austerity. Sure hands guide each silk thread with steady, even tension to create a perfectly balanced luster. But perhaps more than anything, one is awed by the intricate calculations and complicated series of processes that are required to craft each crisply defined motif.

Sasaki took the first step on the road to becoming a master dyer and weaver with a two-year live-in apprenticeship at a hand-crafted tsumugi workshop in Shizuoka Prefecture. Later she also traveled to such renowned *kasuri,* or ikat, centers as Yonago in Tottori Prefecture and Hirose in Shimane Prefecture to study the local techniques. Sasaki's perfection of the e-gasuri techniques was built on this solid foundation of traditional craftsmanship.

The kasuri form of ikat weaving uses tie-dyed threads that are tied at carefully measured intervals and resist-dyed. When woven together the threads form patterns in the resulting cloth. There are several types of kasuri cloth. In some, the specially prepared thread is used only for the warp *(tate-gasuri),* while in others it is used only for the weft *(yoko-gasuri).* Sometimes the kasuri thread is used for both warp and weft *(tateyoko-gasuri).* Sasaki crafts her specialty of e-gasuri, with its seemingly freely drawn figures, using the kasuri thread for just the weft or for both warp and weft.

FULL LENGTH E-GASURI KIMONO "FLOWERS AND FAILING HAIL"
Sonoko Sasaki, 1998

The indigo blue is deeper than most common shades of blue, and noticeably lighter than navy blue. It obtains this tint after being woven with thread that has been thoroughly dyed with plant dye. Based on an original diagram, the design takes on a further elegance after weaving based on careful calculations of the vertical warp and horizontal weft threads. The kimono worn by Sonoko Sasaki *(left)* is also a self-creation. She also created the pastel colored material *(far right)* which contains a fine linear design dyed with a type of safflower.

Next, we will attempt a simplified explanation of the process by which e-gasuri cloth is made. First, a planning diagram is drawn up and transferred onto card to form a template. Then a *tane-ito*, or seed thread, is wound onto a frame the exact width of the planned cloth. The template is placed on top of the seed thread. Then, using the template as a guide, the seed thread is carefully marked to indicate where the threads should be tied together for dyeing. During the dyeing process the tightly bound portions of the thread do not absorb dye, resulting in a kasuri thread exactly as called for by the planning diagram. Finally, the kasuri thread is mounted on a loom and woven.

It certainly sounds simple. But the actual process of marking the seed thread according to the template, tying off the undyed thread and then dyeing it demands an almost excruciating level of care and perseverance.

Moreover, with curved lines and intricately detailed motifs, Sasaki's e-gasuri patterns sometimes call for minute subdivision—bundling every other thread or every third thread. Because the weft thread is so very long, correctly marking the tie-off positions on the weft is immensely difficult work. The slightest inaccuracy in marking where it should be tied off will blur the picture on the final fabric. The weaver must weave the warp and weft threads so that each one meets just as called for by the initial planning diagram and just as they were marked. Suspense is an intrinsic part of the e-gasuri weaving process, because the final result of all this concentrated effort will only be known once weaving is completed.

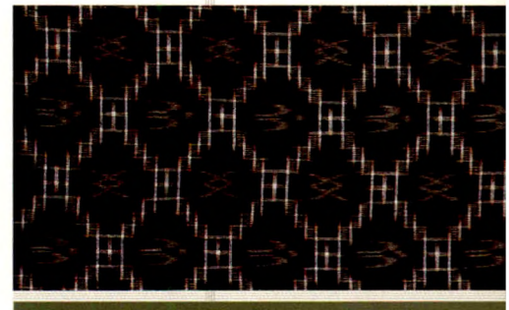
The process is not unchallenging even for the accomplished Sasaki. When she had just begun working in e-gasuri textiles, her concentration while bundling threads for dying could be broken by the sudden ring of the telephone. She says that she has closed the storm shutters on her home to create a quiet space in which to concentrate. She even admits to having avoided contact with other people in order to avoid making mistakes in the essential work of preparing thread for dying. The work requires intensity and concentration, even for a master such as Sasaki. The fruit of her efforts, of course, are beautifully woven e-gasuri fabrics.

Not a single warp or weft thread is out of place in Sasaki's work. Quite the opposite in fact—one is left with the impression that each and every thread in the material has an essential role which is played to perfection.

MODERN KASURI IKAT

Collection of the Kurayoshi Museum, Tottori Prefecture
late 19th–early 20th century.

This piece is an example of modern *e-gasuri*, or picture ikat, patterned with pine, tortoise, prawn, and "long life" character motifs on a deep blue background. After painstakingly precise measurement and marking, only the weft threads are bound and resist-dyed. The flowing lines of the auspicious tortoise and prawn motifs, which look as though they might be painted on, are the fruit of a highly honed technique.



KUMEJIMA TSUMUGI KIMONO WITH BIRD MOTIFS

Hatsu Yamashiro, Designated Holding Group of the Important Intangible Cultural Property of Kumejima Tsumugi, 1994

Kumejima *tsumugi* is characterized by a depth of color derived from dyeing with plant-based dyes and various muds, and the unaffected simplicity of its hand-woven texture. The resulting rich yet subdued colors are woven to create stripes or ikat designs. Kumejima tsumugi is made using techniques which are considered to be among the oldest of any traditional Japanese tsumugi.

ASPECTS OF MT. FUJI

Fuji's Forests

TEXT AND PHOTO BY **YUKIO OHYAMA**

When the first snows of winter fall, I head for the forests of Mt. Fuji wondering how those trees are getting on. "Oh yes, I remember you, and you..." I think as I recognize one tree after another, but their gnarled forms look completely different under a sprinkling of fresh, white snow. I'm not sure if their branches are outstretched in wild abandon, or if there is actually a method to their madness, but there are times when the forest looks like it is really enjoying itself. Maybe the trees are having a good old natter amongst themselves or boasting to each other about their new, pure white coats. I can almost hear them shout to each other, "Look at me, look! See how much I've changed!"

However, the forests of Mt. Fuji are not all as romantic as this. Not long after the war, much of the natural woodland at the foot of the mountain was felled and turned into pulp. Probably 40 or 50 years have passed since cedar and cypress were planted in their place, and I wonder if such manmade timberland can be called "a forest" in the true sense of the word? After all, they do not change with the seasons, and seem strangely devoid of both insect and animal life. There is something quite sad and lonely about trees that are required to do nothing but stand blandly to attention. When I walk in such a forest, I somehow feel that all I can hear is the calculating voice of human beings.

YUKIO OHYAMA has spent more than 30 years photographing Mt. Fuji, and through his publications has given an intimate look at the heart of the mountain. Having spent many long hours quietly face to face with Mt. Fuji, he has many tales to tell.

LETTERS

Environmental Awareness

I am a student from the Asia-Pacific region and I am currently studying in Okayama University in western Japan. At Okayama University, we are very fortunate to receive regular editions of *Asia-Pacific Perspectives: Japan+*, which is a great source of information on Japan and the Asia-Pacific region both for overseas students and Japanese students alike.

I was particularly interested to read the Special Feature on the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle) in your September 2005 edition. As a leading nation in the 21st century and a frontrunner in issues pertaining to environmental preservation, Japan has boldly and aggressively pursued the vital issue of recycling, and has formulated a host of related policies, regulations and guidelines in its attempts to achieve a sustainable society. Through its active promotion of environmental activities, Japan has also played a major role in bringing environmental issues to the fore in the international arena and has done much to raise global awareness of the problem that our planet presently faces.

As I am sure you are aware, the Asia-Pacific region is now a massive consumer of all kinds of products and, at the same time, has massive waste rates. This situation must be addressed with the absolute minimum of delay. If it is not, I dread to think of the potential environmental consequences.

I read with interest that Japan has now established recycling facilities in Thailand, and that it plans further developments both in Thailand and throughout the Southeast Asian region. The Asia-Pacific region is made up of many developing countries, with the notable exception of Australia and New Zealand, and I am sure I speak on behalf of many in the region when I ask Japan to please continue spreading environmental awareness through the introduction of recycling technologies and facilities.

Raphael Semel
Okayama City, Japan

Readers are invited to send in their opinions on any topics raised in any issue of *APP: Japan+*, or indeed on any topic relevant to Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. Letters are welcome either by e-mail **(j-plus@jijigaho.or.jp)** or by post **(*APP: Japan+*, Jiji Gaho Sha, Fonte Akasaka Building, Akasaka 7-10-17, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052, Japan.)**

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SELECTION

Beckoning Cat

Walk around any shopping mall in Japan and you are sure to come across the figure of a cat sitting squat on the floor at the entrance of a store beckoning you to come inside and take a look around. This is the *maneki-neko*, or beckoning cat, loved by generations of Japanese people and believed to be inviting good fortune, safety at home or a prosperous business. In days gone by, the beckoning cat was usually white with a single, raised paw. It was believed that black cats warded off evil spirits, while red cats guarded against misfortune and illness. A raised right paw signifies the inviting of money or good fortune, while a raised left paw is taken to mean attracting customers.

Nowadays, the cats come in all sorts of colors and sizes; it is not at all unusual to see beckoning cats in pink, yellow or a range of other colorful hues, some with both paws raised and others in a variety of seated poses. They even come as money boxes to save up all that loose change, or how about a maneki-neko to rest your chopsticks on? Beckoning cats can usually be purchased at shrines, temples or souvenir shops, but the beckoning cats sold by the lucky charm shop Engiya are proving very popular with visitors to Japan from Asia and many other countries. Just the very idea of maneki-neko cats inviting good fortune and happiness into houses all around the world warms the cockles of the heart. ■

PHOTO: TAKAHIRO SAKUMA • GOODS: ©ENGIYA

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NET & COM 2006
Nikkei BP NET & COM management office
Tel: 03-5210-7001 Fax: 03-5210-7014

2/1 (Wed) – 2/3 (Fri) *Trade/Public Free*
30TH ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT EXHIBITION
ENEX Operation Office
Tel: 03-5543-3013 Fax: 03-5543-3887

2/3 (Fri) – 2/5 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
DIVING FESTIVAL 2006
The Secretariat of the Diving Festival
Tel: 03-3503-7623 Fax: 03-3503-7620

2/7 (Tue) – 2/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public Free*
HEATING, VENTILATING, AIR-CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATING EXPO.
Secretariat of HVAC&R JAPAN
Tel: 03-3219-3562 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/7 (Thu) – 2/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public Free*
Materials/Equipment for Air-Conditioning and Sanitary Exhibition
MACS OFFICE
Tel: 03-3503-7611 Fax: 03-3503-7620

2/14 (Tue) – 2/17 (Fri) *Trade Free*
THE 61st Tokyo INTERNATIONAL GIFT SHOW spring 2006
BUSINESS GUIDE-SHA. INC.
Tel: 03-3843-9851 Fax: 03-3843-9850

2/21 (Tue) – 2/23 (Thu) *Trade/Public ¥3000*
nano tech 2006 International Nanotechnology Exhibition & Conference
Secretariat Office c/o ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3567 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/21 (Tue) – 2/23 (Thu) *Trade/Public ¥3000*
Nano Bio Expo 2006
Secretariat Office c/o ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3564 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/21 (Tue) – 2/23 (Thu) *Trade/Public ¥3000*
neo functional material 2006
Secretariat Office c/o ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3561 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/21 (Tue) – 2/23 (Thu) *Trade/Public ¥3000*
ASTEC 2006
Secretariat Office c/o ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3564 Fax: 03-3292-1813

2/24 (Fri) – 2/26 (Sun) *Trade/Public Free*
40th JAPAN GOLF FAIR 2006
Japan Golf Fair Operational Secretariat
Tel: 03-3437-8400 Fax: 03-3437-8401

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
JAPAN SHOP 2006
NIHON KEIZAI SHINBUN, INC. CULTURAL AND BUSINESS PROJECTS BUREAU
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
ARCHITECTURE + CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS 2006
Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc.
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
RETAILTECH JAPAN 2006
Show Organizer
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
IC CARD WORLD 2006
Nihon Keizai Simbun, Inc.
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
SECURITY SHOW 2006
Secretariat of SECURITY SHOW
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
HOTERES JAPAN 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
Tel: 03-3434-1377 Fax: 03-3434-8076

3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
CATEREX JAPAN 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
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3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
JAPAN FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT SHOW 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
Tel: 03-3434-1377 Fax: 03-3434-8076

3/19 (Sun) *Public*
HARU COMIC CITY 11
Akaboo
Tel: 03-3225-8520

3/22 (Wed) – 3/24 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
Tokyo Health Industry Show 2006
CMP JAPAN Co., Ltd.
Tel: 03-5296-1017 Fax: 03-5296-1018

3/23 (Thu) – 3/26 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
Photo Imaging EXPO 2006
JAPAN COLOR-PHOTO FINISHERS' ASSOCIATION
Tel: 03-3288-0337 Fax: 03-3288-0338

3/23 (Thu) – 3/26 (Sun) *Trade/Public*
Tokyo International Anime Fair 2006
Tokyo International Anime Fair Executive Committee
Tel: 03-5320-4786 Fax: 03-5388-1463

3/31 (Fri) – 4/2 (Sun) *Public ¥1500*
The 33rd Tokyo Motorcycle Show 2006
Tokyo Motorcycle Show Operation Secretariat
Tel: 03-5847-7045 Fax: 03-5847-7046

4/1 (Sat) – 4/2 (Sun) *Public ¥500*
2006 FCI ASIAN INTERNATIONAL DOG SHOW
JAPAN KENNEL CLUB, INC.
Tel: 03-3251-1652 Fax: 03-3251-1659

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
Sea Japan 2006
Sea Japan Secretariat office
Tel: 03-5296-1020 Fax: 03-5296-1018

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
Sensor Expo Japan 2006
Fuji Sankei Business-i. Promotion Division
Tel: 03-3273-6184 Fax: 03-3241-4999

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
The 1st International Homefashion Fair
IHF Office
Tel: 03-3847-9853 Fax: 03-3843-9850

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
33rd INTERNATIONAL PREMIUM INCENTIVE SHOW
Business Guide-sha Inc.
Tel: 03-3847-9155 Fax: 03-3847-9436

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
22nd FORMAL GIFT FAIR
Business Guide-sha Inc.
Tel: 03-3847-9155 Fax: 03-3847-9436

4/6 (Thu) – 4/8 (Sat) *Public ¥1000*
THE 4th PAINT SHOW 2006
The Paint Show 2006 Executive Committee
Tel: 03-6821-5115 Fax: 03-3780-0885

4/12 (Wed) – 4/15 (Sat) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
The Japan International Welding Show 2006
Sanpo Publications, Inc.
Tel: 03-3258-6411 Fax: 03-3258-6430

4/19 (Wed) – 4/21 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
16th FINETECH JAPAN (FPD R&D AND MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY EXPO & CONFERENCE)
FINETECH JAPAN Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

4/19 (Wed) – 4/21 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
2nd International FPD Expo
Display 2006 Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

4/24 (Mon) – 4/26 (Wed) *Trade ¥3000*
CPhI Japan 2006
CMP Japan Co., Ltd.
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4/24 (Mon) – 4/26 (Wed) *Trade ¥3000*
ICSE Japan 2006
CMP Japan Co., Ltd.
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4/28 (Fri) – 4/30 (Sun) *Trade/Public*
Tokyo Special Import-Car Show 2006
Tokyo Special Import-Car Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3360-1821 Fax: 03-3360-1829

4/28 (Fri) – 4/30 (Sun) *Trade/Public*
GARAGE & HOUSING EXPO 2006
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THE MEN BEHIND THE

Festival

In May each year, Tokyo comes alive with the Sanja-matsuri festival —and this year is no exception. Those behind the success of this festival all hail from Taito Ward's Asakusa area, and ensure every aspect of the festival runs smoothly. Jinichi Sugibayashi *(photo center)* heads a team of helpers who are kept busy throughout the duration of the festival. These are the men, ably assisted by local townsfolk, who keep the Edo period traditions alive. Drop by Taito sometime, and savor the flavor of the Japan of yesteryear.

ACCESS Ueno Station, the gateway to Taito, is 60 minutes from Narita Airport by express on the Keisei Line. • Asakusa is five minutes from Ueno on the subway Ginza Line.

/ENT SCHEDULE Ueno cherry blossom festival *mid-Mar–early Apr* • Sumida Park cherry blossom festival *mid-Mar–early Apr* • Horseback archery in Asakusa *Apr 15* • Sanja-matsuri festival *May 19–2*

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VARIOUS COMPONENTS IN THE HANDS OF A SEASONED LATHE OPERATOR PHOTO: SEIYA KAWAMOTO

26 APR 2006

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4 **Food: Universal Instant Noodles** In 2005, a Japanese foodstuffs manufacturer released the world's first "space food instant ramen."

6 **Tourism: A Great Place to Visit** Japan is undertaking a number of initiatives to promote inbound tourism.

8 **Special Feature: Unsung Heroes** We look at some examples of Japan's many small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) manufacturing their own distinctive, first-rate products in such areas as musical instruments, hobby goods and fashion.

24 **Manga: Hybrid Art—Japanese Manga and Thai Culture** Thai *manga* artist Wisut Ponnimit is proving a huge success in Japan.

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36 **Interview: Yasuhiro Yamashita** A leading figure in the world of judo gives his views on how the sport will fare in the 21st century.

40 **Traditional Art: Inlaid with Gold** The process of *chinkin*, gold inlay lacquer ware ornamentation, has a long and venerable history.

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ASIA-PACIFIC PERSPECTIVES | JAPAN+

March 2006 | Volume 3, Number 11 | © Jiji Gaho Sha, Inc.

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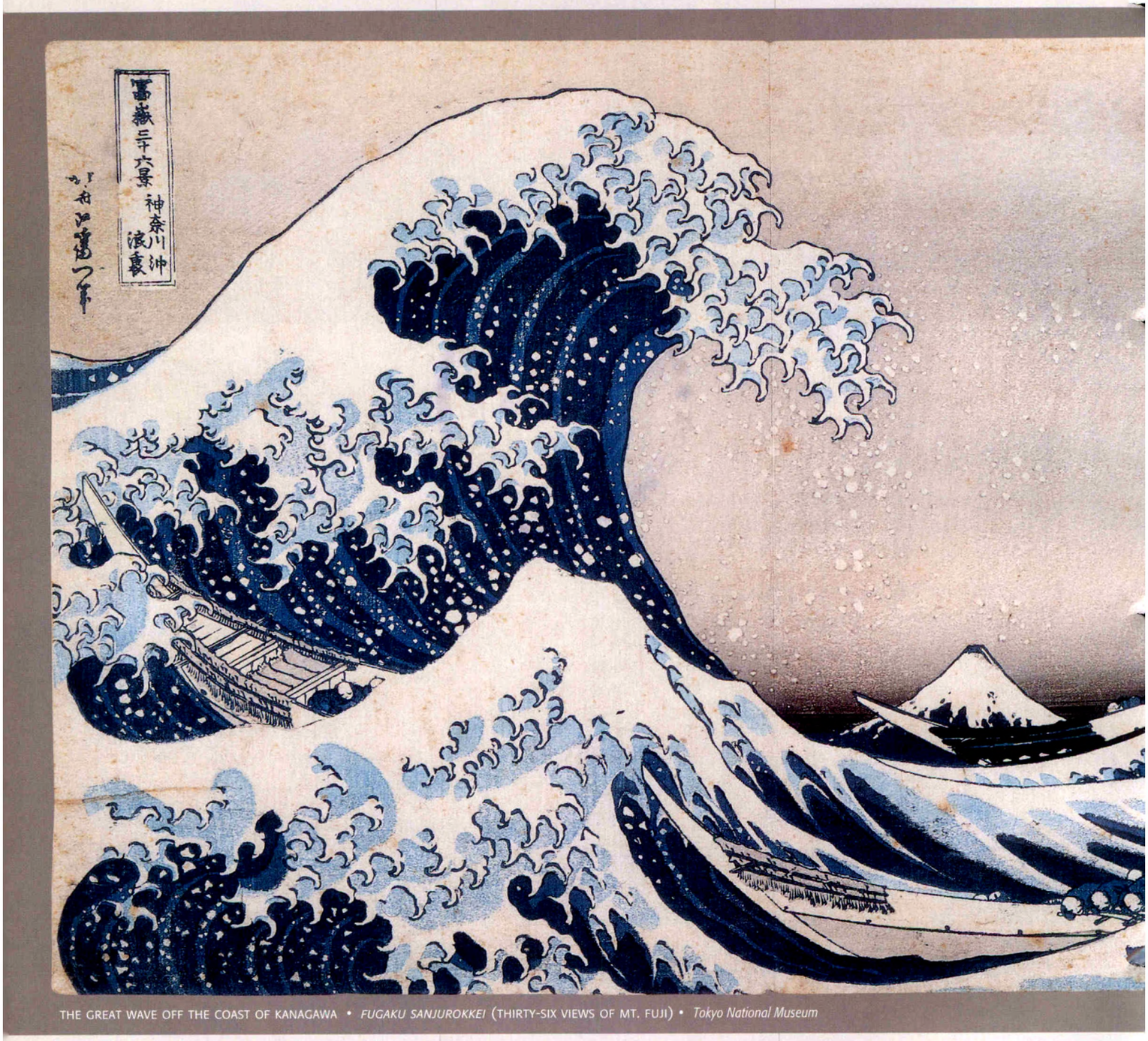
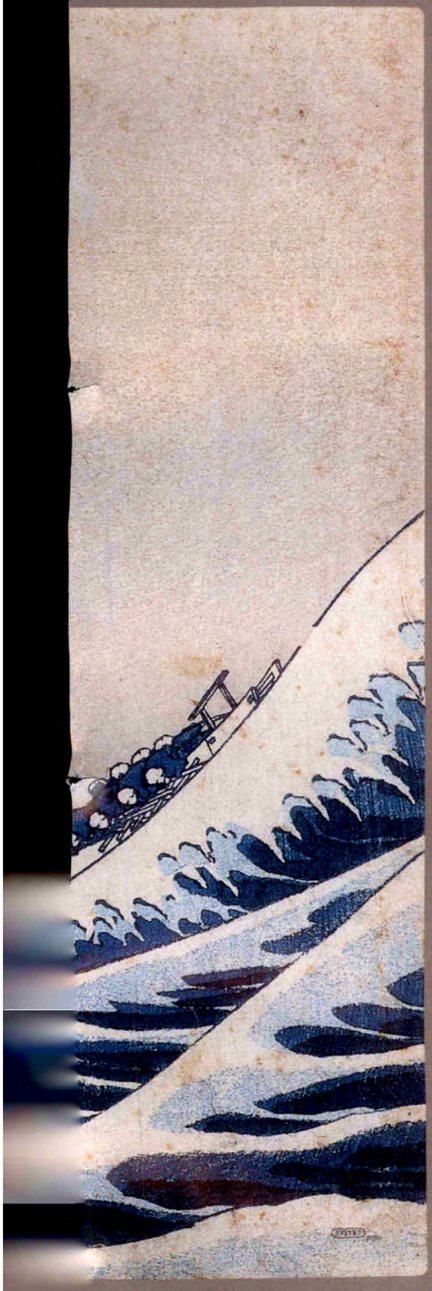


THE GREAT WAVE OFF THE COAST OF KANAGAWA • *FUGAKU SANJUROKKEI* (THIRTY-SIX VIEWS OF MT. FUJI) • *Tokyo National Museum*

I have been painting since I was a young child but I didn't create anything of any consequence until I turned 70. At the age of 73 I finally came to understand the form of some animals and plants. By the time I reach 80 I will have advanced further, at 90 I will have mastered my chosen path and when I am well over 100, my works will probably start to come to life." *Ukiyo-e* artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) said this at the age of 75, reflecting on a career which eventually spanned 70 years from his debut at the age of 20 to his death at the grand old age of 90. Hokusai was the only Japanese person to be included in *LIFE* magazine's 1999 list of the "100 most important people of the second millennium."

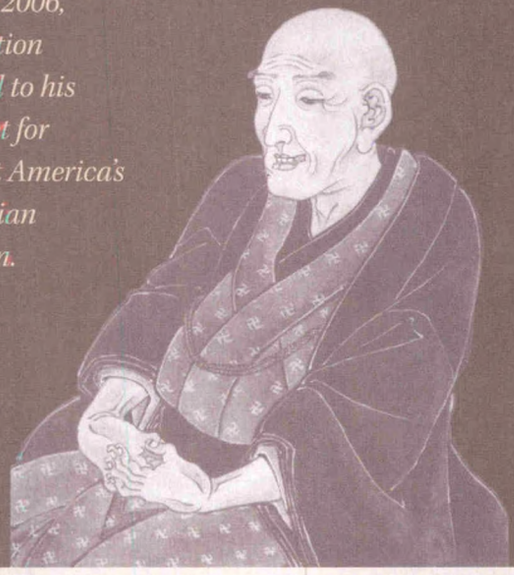
Ukiyo-e refers to woodblock prints mainly dealing in motifs of the "floating world" beloved of the people of Edo period (1603–1867) Japan. Different from the stylized paintings enjoyed by the upper classes, ukiyo-e was reasonably priced and depicted contemporary celebrities, fashions and trends, making it extremely popular among the common folk. The ukiyo-e artists worked hard to produce unconstrained, innovative works that could be appreciated by everyone.

This ease with which ukiyo-e images were understood helped spread the popularity of Hokusai's works overseas. Renowned Hokusai researcher Seiji Nagata, Vice Director and Curator in Chief of the Ota Memorial Museum of Art comments, "Some say that Hokusai *manga* (sketches by Hokusai) being used in the packaging of exported Japanese ceramic goods in the



THE MAN WHO LIVED TO PAINT

The Hokusai Exhibition featuring some 500 of the great ukiyo-e artist's works was recently held at the Tokyo National Museum. In March 2006, an exhibition dedicated to his work is set for display at America's Smithsonian Institution.



LEFT: Composer Debussy's symphony *La Mer* (The Sea) is said to have been inspired by this work that captures a moment of a wave.

RIGHT: *Portrait of Hokusai* by Keisai Eisen. The motifs on Hokusai's kimono are an emblem traditionally associated with Japanese Buddhism.

FAR RIGHT: Hokusai's comical sketches may represent the roots of Japanese *manga*. *Denshin Kaishu Hokusai Manga*, Vol. 10, Mitsuru Uragami Collection.

late 19th century was one reason behind the advent of 'Japonism' in Europe." It is well known that ukiyo-e, including the works of Hokusai, had a major impact upon European impressionist artists.

Famous for his celebrated series of landscape prints *Fugaku Sanjurokkei* (Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji—*above left*), Hokusai lived an extremely long life for someone in the Edo period, when a lifespan of 50 years was the norm. Throughout his life he constantly pushed himself to evolve, focusing on a broad range of subjects, including female beauties, ghosts and various scenes from classical literature.

"Once Hokusai felt that he had mastered a certain theme he put that style and its motifs behind him and challenged himself in a new area. He had no interest in fame and changed recognized pseudonyms as many as 30 times. I think that this approach to life was Hokusai's most appealing aspect," comments Nagata.

In his latter years he adopted the signature name "Old-Man-Mad-About-Painting." As the name suggests, Hokusai's passion for painting was such that if were alive today no doubt he would still not be satisfied with his works despite his international fame.

— MAYUMI NAKAMURA

UNIVERSAL INS

In summer 2005, a Japanese foodstuffs manufacturer released the world's first "space food instant ramen." What lies behind the strong bond that Japanese people feel toward ramen noodles?

What comes to mind if you are asked what is Japan's national food? Sushi? Tempura? If you want the answer, try asking a Japanese person, preferably someone who has spent a long time overseas, "Which Japanese dish would you most like to eat at the moment?" The chances are that the reply would be, "Um, I suppose it'd be ramen." But is ramen actually Japanese?

Ramen – a variety of Chinese noodles – originally came to Japan early in the Meiji period (1868–1912). In those days it was mainly eaten in the Chinatown areas of port cities such as Yokohama or Hakodate. After World War II, many Japanese returnees from the Chinese mainland earned a living by opening ramen stalls in the black markets among the burnt ruins that had been Japan's cities. The tastes and flavors they had experienced in China were passed on and ramen soon became a firm favorite with the people of Japan.

But more than anything else, it was the appearance of instant noodles that elevated ramen to the status of Japan's "national dish." Instant ramen is sold in packages or cups, can be prepared in just three minutes, and the super convenient cup ramen variety doesn't even need any utensils for preparation. Instant ramen is an original Japanese invention, born after a long period of research and development by Momofuku Ando, founder of Nissin Food Products Co., Ltd., Japan's premier ramen manufacturer which created the world's first instant ramen in 1958 and the first cup ramen in 1971. Since its first appearance in 1958, the ease and convenience of instant ramen has seen it rapidly establish itself in the Japanese diet. In the first year alone, approximately 13 million meals were produced, but by 2004 annual production had increased 422 times to 5.49 billion portions – more than 43 portions per person. Through the years, instant ramen has developed into a truly global food, sold in over 100 countries of the world with a total annual consumption of more than 65.25 billion portions (International Ramen Manufacturers Association; IRMA survey, 2004).

In summer 2005, instant ramen took another monumental step forward, beyond Japan, and even beyond the bounds of the earth – into space. "Space Ram" became the world's first

TANT NOODLES

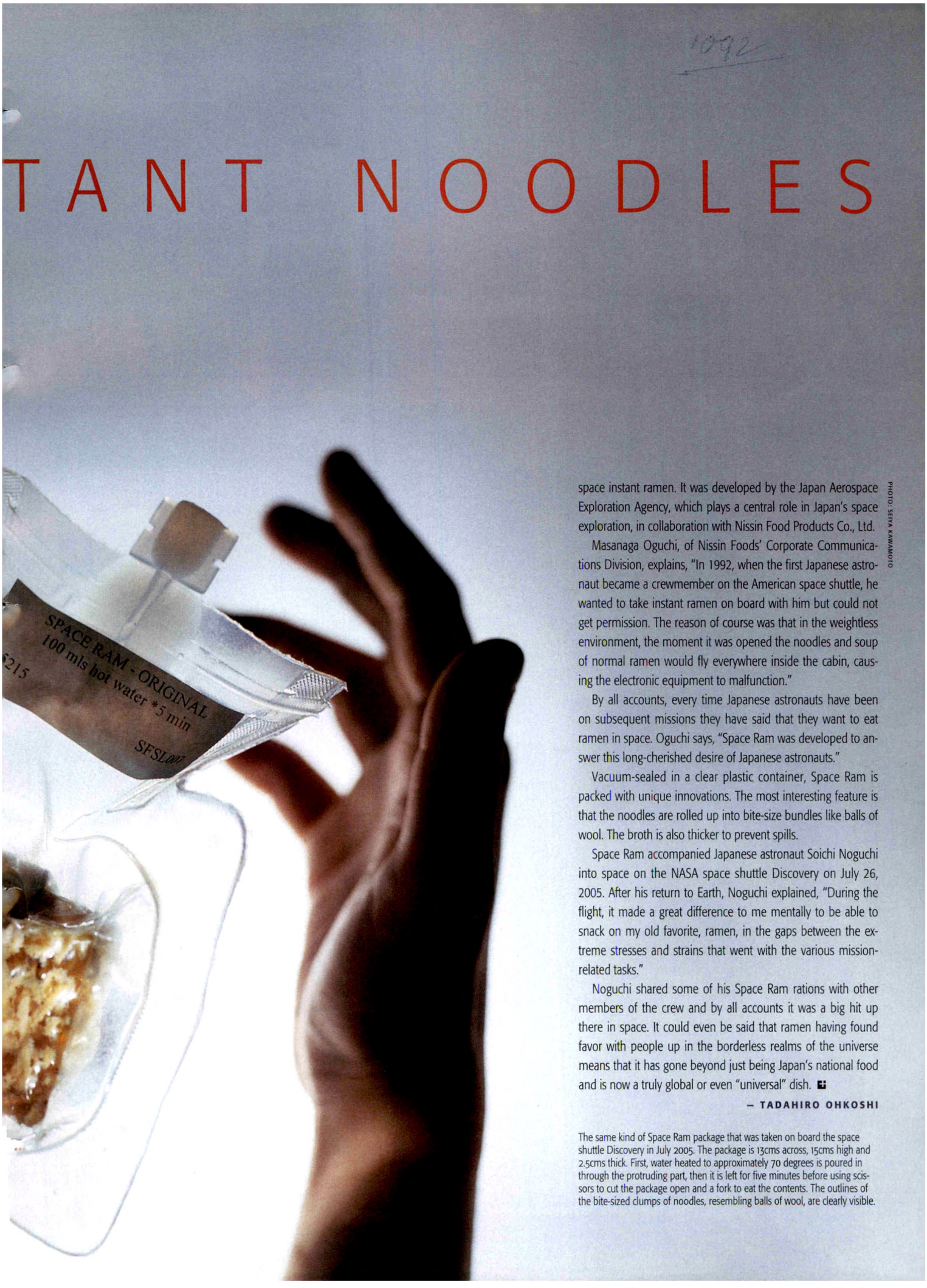


PHOTO: SEIYA KAWAMOTO

space instant ramen. It was developed by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, which plays a central role in Japan's space exploration, in collaboration with Nissin Food Products Co., Ltd.

Masanaga Oguchi, of Nissin Foods' Corporate Communications Division, explains, "In 1992, when the first Japanese astronaut became a crewmember on the American space shuttle, he wanted to take instant ramen on board with him but could not get permission. The reason of course was that in the weightless environment, the moment it was opened the noodles and soup of normal ramen would fly everywhere inside the cabin, causing the electronic equipment to malfunction."

By all accounts, every time Japanese astronauts have been on subsequent missions they have said that they want to eat ramen in space. Oguchi says, "Space Ram was developed to answer this long-cherished desire of Japanese astronauts."

Vacuum-sealed in a clear plastic container, Space Ram is packed with unique innovations. The most interesting feature is that the noodles are rolled up into bite-size bundles like balls of wool. The broth is also thicker to prevent spills.

Space Ram accompanied Japanese astronaut Soichi Noguchi into space on the NASA space shuttle Discovery on July 26, 2005. After his return to Earth, Noguchi explained, "During the flight, it made a great difference to me mentally to be able to snack on my old favorite, ramen, in the gaps between the extreme stresses and strains that went with the various mission-related tasks."

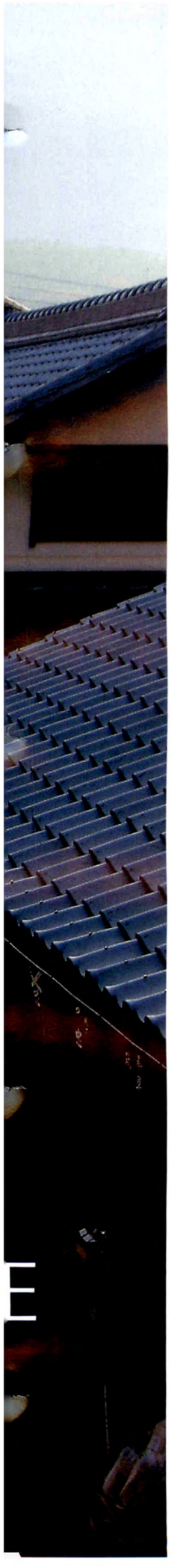
Noguchi shared some of his Space Ram rations with other members of the crew and by all accounts it was a big hit up there in space. It could even be said that ramen having found favor with people up in the borderless realms of the universe means that it has gone beyond just being Japan's national food and is now a truly global or even "universal" dish.

— TADAHIRO OHKOSHI

The same kind of Space Ram package that was taken on board the space shuttle Discovery in July 2005. The package is 13cms across, 15cms high and 2.5cms thick. First, water heated to approximately 70 degrees is poured in through the protruding part, then it is left for five minutes before using scissors to cut the package open and a fork to eat the contents. The outlines of the bite-sized clumps of noodles, resembling balls of wool, are clearly visible.

A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT

Okage Yokocho in Ise City, Mie Prefecture, recreates Meiji period streets. Located on the way to Ise Shrine, Okage Yokocho is the creation of Charisma List member Masutane Hamada, president of Akafuku Co., Ltd.



TADASHI AIZAWA

Japan is undertaking a number of initiatives to promote inbound tourism. How will these efforts change the shape of Japanese tourism?

GENSAKU IZUMIYA

ISHIBABA ICHIJYA

ABOVE: Tsurunoyu Hot Spring in Nyuto Hot Spring Village in Akita Prefecture. Manager of this hot spring, Kazushi Sato is on the Charisma List for his efforts to take advantage of the rustic environment to revitalize the area.

LEFT: Whitewater rafting on the Shiribetsu River in the Niseko area of Hokkaido. Whitewater rafting was introduced to the region as an idea of Charisma Ambassador Ross Findlay.

Japan is rich with tourist resources: the megalopolis of Tokyo with its shopping and entertainment; Kyoto and Nara, where traditional culture still lives and breathes in shrines and temples; or the regions where natural beauty and local culture fascinate the traveler. However, because little attention has been placed on the tourist industry in the past, the number of inbound foreign tourists into Japan ranks only 33rd in the world—the lowest among the advanced nations of the world. In 2002, there was a huge gap between outbound and inbound tourist numbers—16.52 million Japanese traveled overseas while a mere 5.24 million foreigners traveled to Japan. Japan is now promoting policies to establish itself as tourism-oriented nation, aiming to increase the number of inbound foreign tourists to ten million by 2010.

One aspect of tourism policy that is attracting attention is the "Tourism Charisma" initiative highlighting those people whose creativity and effort has seen them succeed at a time when bland tourist resorts created under the previous model are struggling. The aim is to spread the wisdom of these trailblazers, who have been designated "Charisma Ambassadors of Tourism," throughout the nation, by means of the Internet, local seminars and a host of other measures.

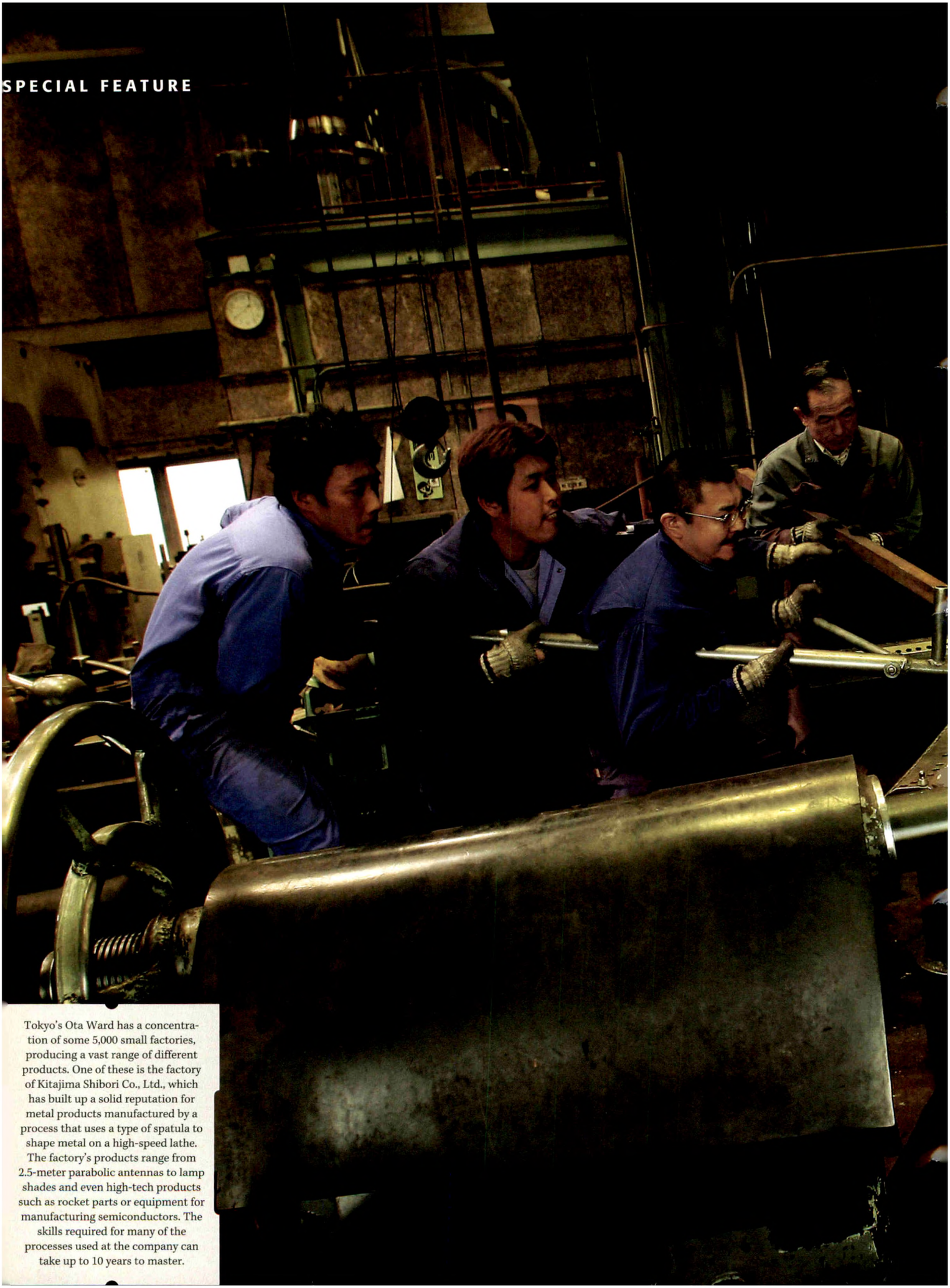
Already, the Selection Panel for the Top 100 Charisma Ambassadors of Tourism, chaired by Keio University professor, Haruo Shimada, Special Advisor to the Cabinet Office has chosen 100 people from all over Japan during the four-year period from 2002 to last year. These people are hotel managers, town mayors, etc. but all of them have played key roles in revitalizing their regions through tourism.

Let's take a look at some examples. The hot springs at Beppu in Oita Prefecture are probably the most famous in Japan, not only attracting Japanese, but also tourists from the Republic of Korea, Taiwan and other regions of Asia. However, since the bursting of the bubble economy the number of domestic group tours—typified by annual company trips—has decreased dramatically. "Charisma Ambassador" Koichiro Tsuruta, manager of the Tsuruta Hotel, responded by shifting his marketing emphasis from groups to individuals, creating a full range of options for his guests such as fireworks displays, beauty treatments and therapy utilizing the properties of the hot springs. His ideas have caught on, and now Beppu has a steady flow of around 10 million tourists per year.

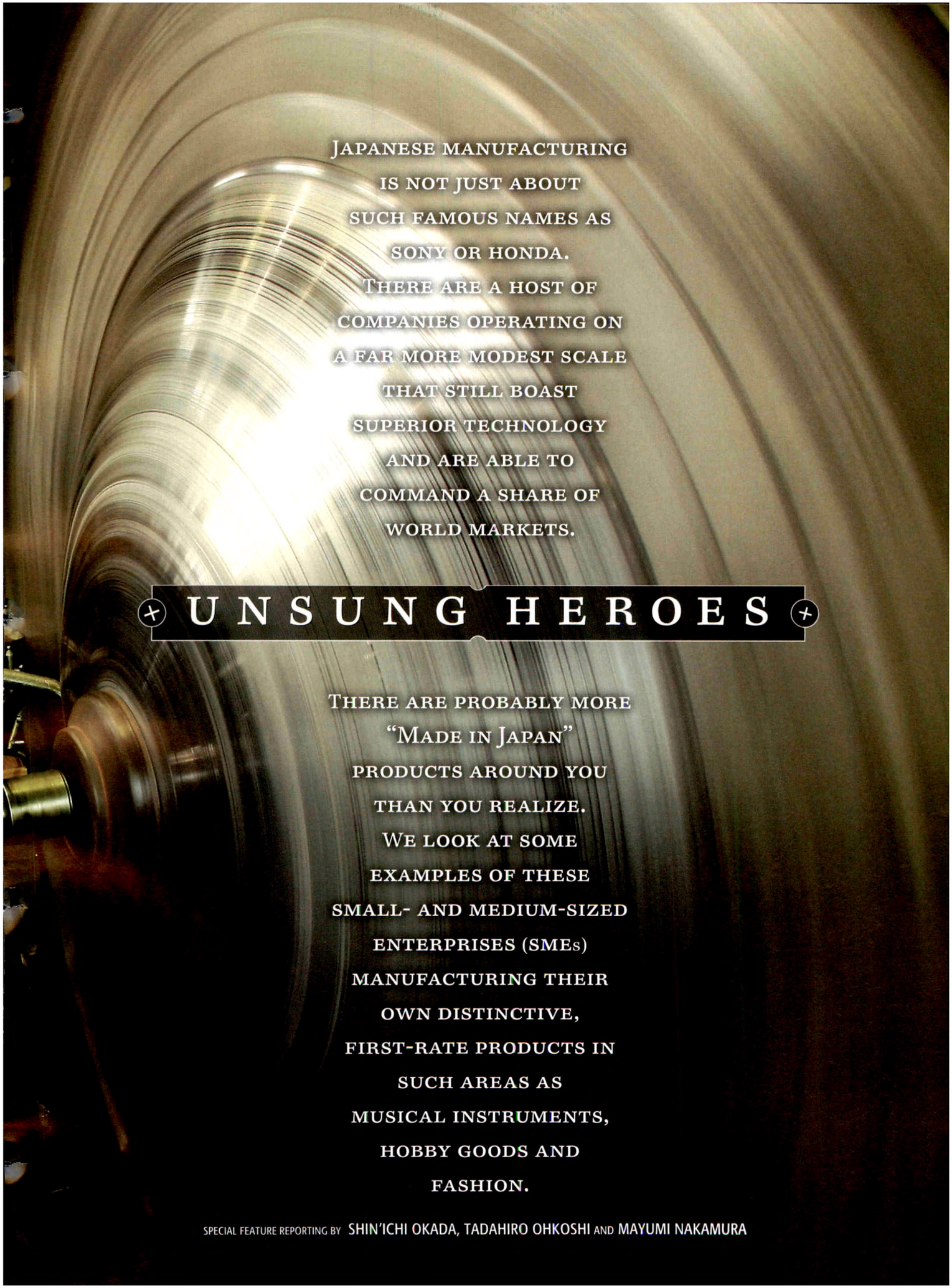
Ross Findlay, managing director of the Niseko Adventure Centre in Hokkaido is also on the Charisma list. Niseko is famous for having some of the best ski-fields in Japan. Findlay established his Adventure Center in 1995, offering guests a range of adventure activities including rock climbing, kayaking and whitewater rafting experiences. The idea has been a great success, attracting tourists into Niseko not only during the winter season, but all through the year.

After completing the selection of the 100 Charisma Ambassadors, the idea's originator, Professor Shimada, summed up, "The foundation of tourism lies first and foremost in the fact that the local people of the area are thriving and that they are proud of their region's culture. The fact that they are clearly enjoying their lives serves to attract others to visit. 'A great place to live and a great place to visit' is the ideal."

— SHIN'ICHI OKADA



Tokyo's Ota Ward has a concentration of some 5,000 small factories, producing a vast range of different products. One of these is the factory of Kitajima Shibori Co., Ltd., which has built up a solid reputation for metal products manufactured by a process that uses a type of spatula to shape metal on a high-speed lathe. The factory's products range from 2.5-meter parabolic antennas to lamp shades and even high-tech products such as rocket parts or equipment for manufacturing semiconductors. The skills required for many of the processes used at the company can take up to 10 years to master.



JAPANESE MANUFACTURING IS NOT JUST ABOUT SUCH FAMOUS NAMES AS SONY OR HONDA. THERE ARE A HOST OF COMPANIES OPERATING ON A FAR MORE MODEST SCALE THAT STILL BOAST SUPERIOR TECHNOLOGY AND ARE ABLE TO COMMAND A SHARE OF WORLD MARKETS.

UNSUNG HEROES

THERE ARE PROBABLY MORE "MADE IN JAPAN" PRODUCTS AROUND YOU THAN YOU REALIZE. WE LOOK AT SOME EXAMPLES OF THESE SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMEs) MANUFACTURING THEIR OWN DISTINCTIVE, FIRST-RATE PRODUCTS IN SUCH AREAS AS MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, HOBBY GOODS AND FASHION.

SPECIAL FEATURE REPORTING BY SHIN'ICHI OKADA, TADAHIRO OHKOSHI AND MAYUMI NAKAMURA

ABOVE: Roland's latest top-of-the-range Fantom X synthesizer.
INSET RIGHT: Legendary percussionist Omar Hakim is a big fan of Roland electric drums.

K. YAIRI GUITARS

PAUL MCCARTNEY, David Crosby, the late Jerry Garcia... there is a long list of rock greats who have used and become devoted fans of K. Yairi guitars. This company, which is based in Kani City, Gifu Prefecture, specializes in acoustic guitars, and in the current age of mechanized mass production, K. Yairi still insists on making its guitars completely by hand. It is a small company of some 30 people, mostly luthiers, who really can be described as guitar maestros.

The company president is Kazuo Yairi *(photo right)*, himself a luthier. He first came into contact with guitars in the 1960s, when he was working for his father's musical instrument company. At that time, the company was mass producing cheap guitars—known then as "three-dollar guitars"—which had been ordered by an American instrument buyer. However, rather than merely churning out poor-quality guitars, Yairi was more interested in making "real" guitars. He went to the US to study guitar making, and in 1965 he took over his father's company, becoming president. Under his guidance, Yairi's company began handcrafting guitars, and it obstinately stuck to its small batch production of just 20 guitars a day while other companies were being subcontracted to churn out guitars with famous brand names.

Yairi's production philosophy met with the approval of major US instrument retailer St. Louis Music, and he was able to release his guitars onto the world market under the brand name Alvarez Yairi. This has now become a world-class brand, famous for the high-quality workmanship and subtle timbre of its guitars.

"We let the wood for our guitars dry naturally over a period of five to 10 years," says Yairi. "It's the complete opposite of the normal way of doing things—many companies are more interested in seeing how much money they can make by evening from the wood they got that morning. To make something really good takes time. You can't get there by the superfast bullet train, you need to take the slow train and savor the ride."

ROLAND

JUST ABOUT ANYONE with an interest in contemporary music must have heard the name Roland, makers of synthesizers, electric pianos and drums, and other electric instruments. Based in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture, the company takes its name from one of the Knights of the Round Table, and many people might be surprised to learn that it is, in fact, a Japanese company. Since it was founded it 1972, Roland has always aimed at the world market, and now some 70% of its products are manufactured for sale overseas.

Roland developed Japan's first domestically-produced synthesizer in 1973. Since then it has produced a string of groundbreaking instruments that have changed the face of popular music, including the guitar synthesizer, and the MC-8 microcomposer—the world's first musical instrument with an onboard central processing unit (CPU). The latter was used extensively by technopop innovators the Yellow Magic Orchestra, one of Japan's finest musical exports, who played a significant role in popularizing synthesizer music. Roland's founder and special consultant, Ikutaro Kakehashi, is also the originator of the MIDI (Musical Instruments Digital Interface) standard, which allows electronic instruments and computers to exchange data. In recognition of this major contribution to popular music, in 2000 Kakehashi became the first Japanese to leave his handprint on Hollywood's musical hall of fame, the Hollywood Rockwalk.

"There is a high risk with electronic instruments, because we are producing new musical instruments that have not yet been tried and tested," says Kakehashi. "Market research is completely useless in this situation. When we released the first electric piano in the 1970s people were very critical, asking if there would ever be any use for it. But everyone changed their opinion pretty quickly when Elton John used one of our products on his world tour. I think the main thing is just to keep on producing new products without worrying too much about past experiences."

The workshop where K. Yairi guitars are made. The luthiers handcraft each guitar one at a time.

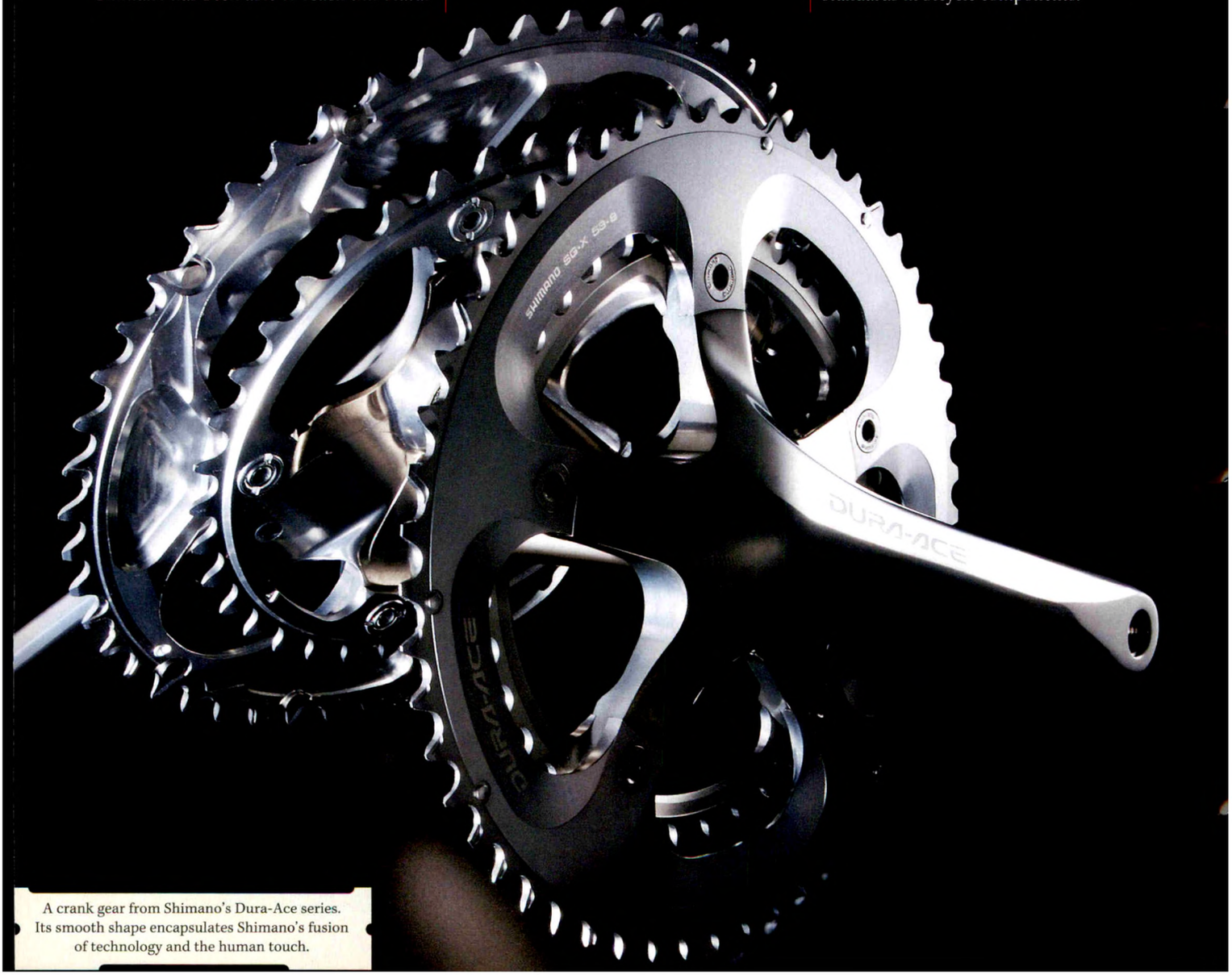
SHIMANO

* * * * *

The Tour de France is the greatest cycle race in the world, a grueling marathon through the beautiful French countryside, and culminating in the center of Paris. The 2005 Tour de France ended in victory for American racer Lance Armstrong, giving him an unprecedented seven consecutive Tour wins. Lending its support to this phenomenal sporting achievement was Japanese cycle parts manufacturer Shimano, Inc.

Shimano was established in 1921 in Osaka as a company manufacturing bicycle freewheels, and has grown to become one of the world's leading bicycle parts makers. It is known as the Intel of the bicycle industry because like the chip manufacturer its ubiquitous products set the standards throughout the industry—Shimano has been able to reach this status through its ceaseless innovation. The bicycle industry has traditionally been divided into manufacturers of complete bicycles and various parts manufacturers each specializing in different parts for the gears, derailleurs, and so on. In 1972 Shimano overturned this accepted wisdom by linking several components of the bicycle together under its "total system" components concept. This was marketed as the Dura-Ace line of products, which evolved rapidly as successive new developments were made. A revolutionary development came in 1990 when the gearshift lever, which had traditionally been on the frame of the bicycle, was integrated into the brake lever. This allowed racers to shift gear smoothly without taking their hands from the handlebars, which made a big difference to racers up against the clock in the tough sport of road racing. Within just a few years, Shimano's new system had become the standard that all racers were using on their bicycles.

Road racing is especially popular in Europe, where not just functionality but also component design comes under the closest scrutiny. "We intend to keep pursuing the special Shimano quality that people have come to expect from us," says designer Yoko Terasawa. It is the fusion of technology and the human touch that is the driving force behind Shimano's astonishing success, helping it set new standards in bicycle components.



A crank gear from Shimano's Dura-Ace series. Its smooth shape encapsulates Shimano's fusion of technology and the human touch.

PHOTO: KEIZO OKUBO

TAMIYA

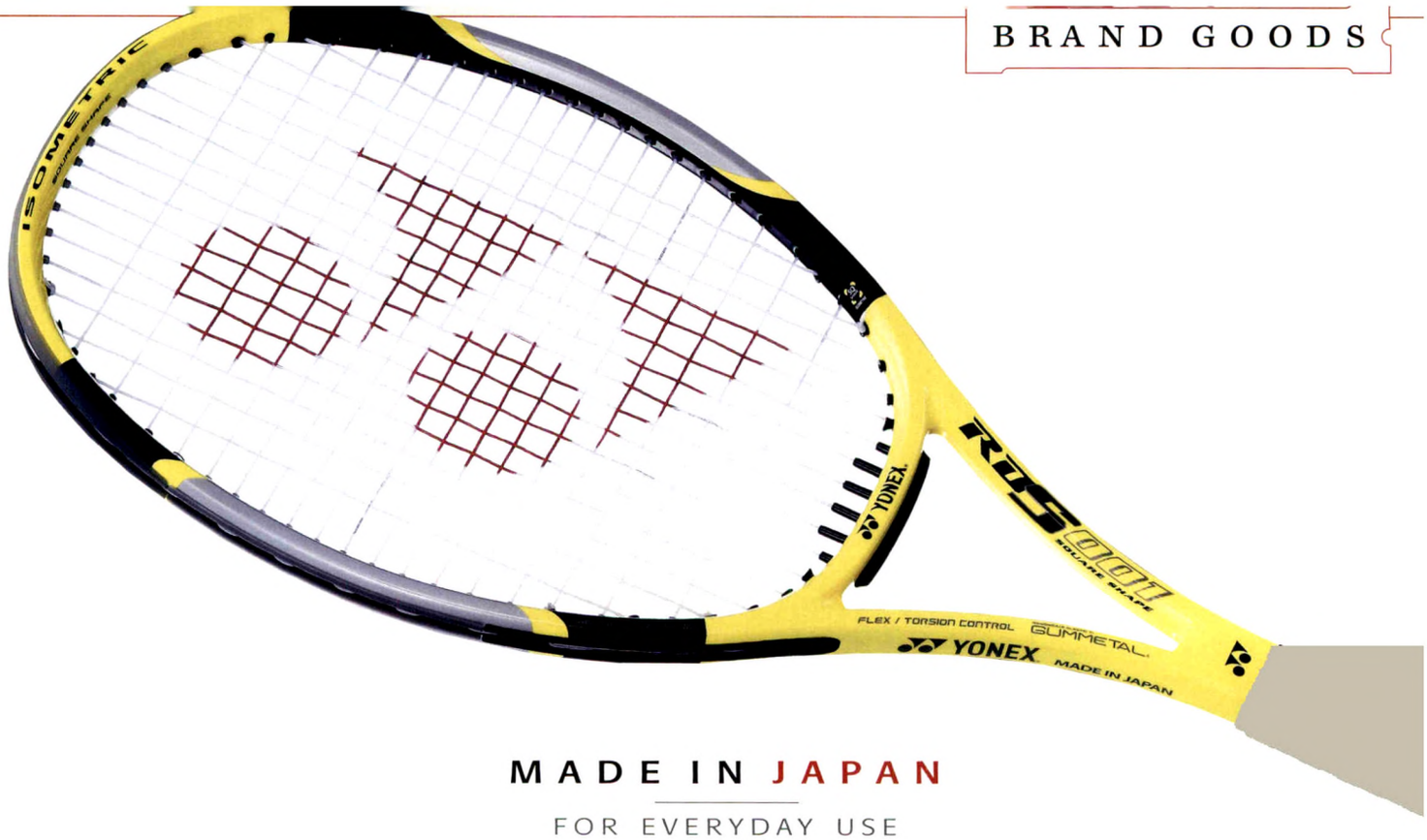
☆ ☆ ☆

Two white stars; one on a red square, the other on a blue square. Hobby shops throughout the world use the twin star design to ply their trade but it is, in fact, the emblem of Japanese model manufacturer Tamiya, Inc., which is based in Shizuoka City, Shizuoka Prefecture. That the trademark of one company has come to be recognized as a joint symbol for the whole industry worldwide surely speaks volumes for the status that Tamiya has achieved among model enthusiasts.

The Tamiya name has become synonymous with quality in the model-making world—even beginners find Tamiya model kits easy to understand and assemble, and the completed models are very realistic. This quality is the result of superior technology in the creation of the molding machinery essential for molding the parts in such exquisite detail, as well as painstaking research into the originals to ensure that all the parts are cast as faithful, realistic replicas. Tamiya has always felt strongly that the quality of the product depends on the quality of the machinery used in the molding process, and was among the very first companies to develop its own molding machinery. It is also a particularly well-known piece of model-making lore that when Tamiya decided to produce replica model kits of Porsche cars it actually purchased a Porsche for reference, taking it to pieces to check on every minute detail.

"Of course we want our customers to experience the enjoyment and satisfaction that comes with making something," says Akira Yamamoto of Tamiya's Promotion Division. "But at the same time, we want to ensure the sort of realism that lets modelmakers feel the romance of the real thing when they assemble our model kits. That's why we go to such lengths to get our models exactly right. It's the Tamiya way of doing things."

Yamamoto proudly stands in front of a row of Formula One cars, purchased just like the Porsche so that modelmaking fans of Formula One cars can be assured of absolute realism when they come to assemble their Tamiya kits.



MADE IN JAPAN

FOR EVERYDAY USE

"MADE IN JAPAN" IS RECOGNIZED GLOBALLY AS A SYMBOL OF QUALITY. WE LOOK AT SOME OF THE JAPANESE COMPANIES MAKING THE PRODUCTS THAT PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD USE IN THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES.

BIG-NAME BRANDS like Sony, Honda or Toyota—people around the world see them everyday, and just about everyone knows that they are Japanese companies. But as well as these companies there are a great many other Japanese companies operating on a global scale whose names have become worldwide brands. What's more, many of these companies began life as small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in just the same way as Sony or Honda, and today many of these companies are global brands in their own right making products that impact on the lives of people across the globe.

One such company is YKK Corporation. There must be few people who do not have some article of clothing or other that uses a YKK zip fastener. YKK traces its beginnings back to 1934 when Tadao Yoshida founded Yoshida Kogyo, which took the trade name YKK in 1946. Since then, YKK fasteners have been used in clothes the world over. As testament to the company's technological ability, the spacesuits used in the Apollo 11 mission that put the first men on the moon in 1969 used airtight fasteners made by YKK, and YKK fasteners are even used for diving suits and as watertight fasteners that can be easily opened and closed for tunnel drainage pipes. YKK now commands a 45% global market share in fasteners, and has established a glowing reputation for setting global standards.

In the field of sports products as well, Japanese companies have built up a huge presence. The company Yonex started out manufacturing badminton rackets, and now has the top market share of competition standard rackets and was the official provider of badminton shuttlecocks for the past four Olympic Games. At the Athens Olympics, recent world championships, and other major competitions the vast majority of medalwinnners have powered their way to victory using Yonex rackets. Yonex has also found success with its tennis rackets, receiving a huge boost in 1980 when it signed a sponsorship deal to provide tennis legend Martina Navratilova with rackets. Since then Yonex has supplied rackets to such world top 10 ranking stars as Lleyton Hewitt, David Nalbandian and Elena Dementieva, as well as top professional Martina Hingis.

Now a popular brand for sports enthusiasts of all levels, sports shoe manufacturer Asics started out in the city of Kobe in 1949. In the soccer world, for example, the players of top Italian team Inter Milan regularly use Asics soccer boots. Asics has also gained a reputation as a top running shoe with 2004 Athens Olympic marathon gold medallist Stefano Baldini proudly crossing the finish line wearing Asics footwear. In the New York Marathon, one of the world's top open marathon events which attracts runners from some 100 countries, over 50% of the runners now use Asics footwear.

Even in places where you may not be expecting it, "Made in Japan" goods are helping people the world over. Take a look around—there are probably a great many "Made in Japan" products helping you in your everyday life as well.

FACING PAGE (TOP):
The latest Yonex RDS001 as used by Australian tennis ace Lleyton Hewitt.

FACING PAGE (CENTER):
Japanese woman runner Naoko Takahashi used this type of Asics footwear for her gold medal-winning marathon at the Sydney Olympics.

THIS PAGE:
This airtight fastener shows the stylish technology of YKK.

A WholeGarment knitting machine at the factory of Shima Seiki Manufacturing. This machine produces complete, seamless garments.

EVISU

The seagull logo painted on the back pocket gives these jeans an unmistakable identity of their own. The trademark is so distinctive that anyone who sees a pair of these jeans will recognize them as Evisu straight away. Evisu started in 1991, when Hidehiko Yamane, a great fan and dedicated follower of fashion, started making his own jeans. From such small beginnings Evisu has grown beyond Japan, becoming an international brand beloved of top celebrities such as soccer superstar David Beckham and Grammy Award-winning singer Beyonce from Destiny's Child.

Evisu, which takes its motif from a Japanese deity, is based in the city of Osaka. The company has acquired a reputation for being fastidious about the denim it selects for its jeans, and rather than uniform mass-production it favors the look and quality of the old days. As an example of its dedication to authenticity, it uses "No. 1 denim" woven on prewar power looms and is not preshrunk before manufacturing. Evisu jeans will shrink as much as two inches when washed, and buyers are mindful of this when they make their purchase. After washing the jeans once, they take the jeans back to the store for any fine adjustments which may be necessary to the length. As the grand finale, the seagull logo is carefully painted on in the color of the customer's personal choice.

"An amazing amount of time and effort goes into the manufacture of every single pair of Evisu jeans," explains store manager Yoshimasa Kobayashi from the main Evisu store in Osaka. "But this means that every customer gets their own, original pair of jeans, which fit them perfectly and which they can really enjoy wearing." Evisu's head store sees a constant stream of young visitors sporting the seagull logo. The brand has certainly captured a section of the market with a style that is not simply jeans, but with the unmistakable originality and quality of Evisu.

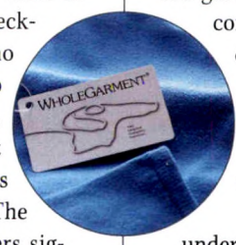
PHOTOS: KOJI FUKUNAGA

SHIMA SEIKI

PHOTO: TADASHI OKOCHI

If you think fashion, you probably think of such leading European brands as Hermès, Louis Vuitton, MaxMara, and Giorgio Armani. These giants of the fashion industry all share one thing in common: they use the WholeGarment technology developed by Japanese knitting machine manufacturer Shima Seiki Manufacturing. The WholeGarment technology produces complete knitted garments and does away with the need for sewing seams.

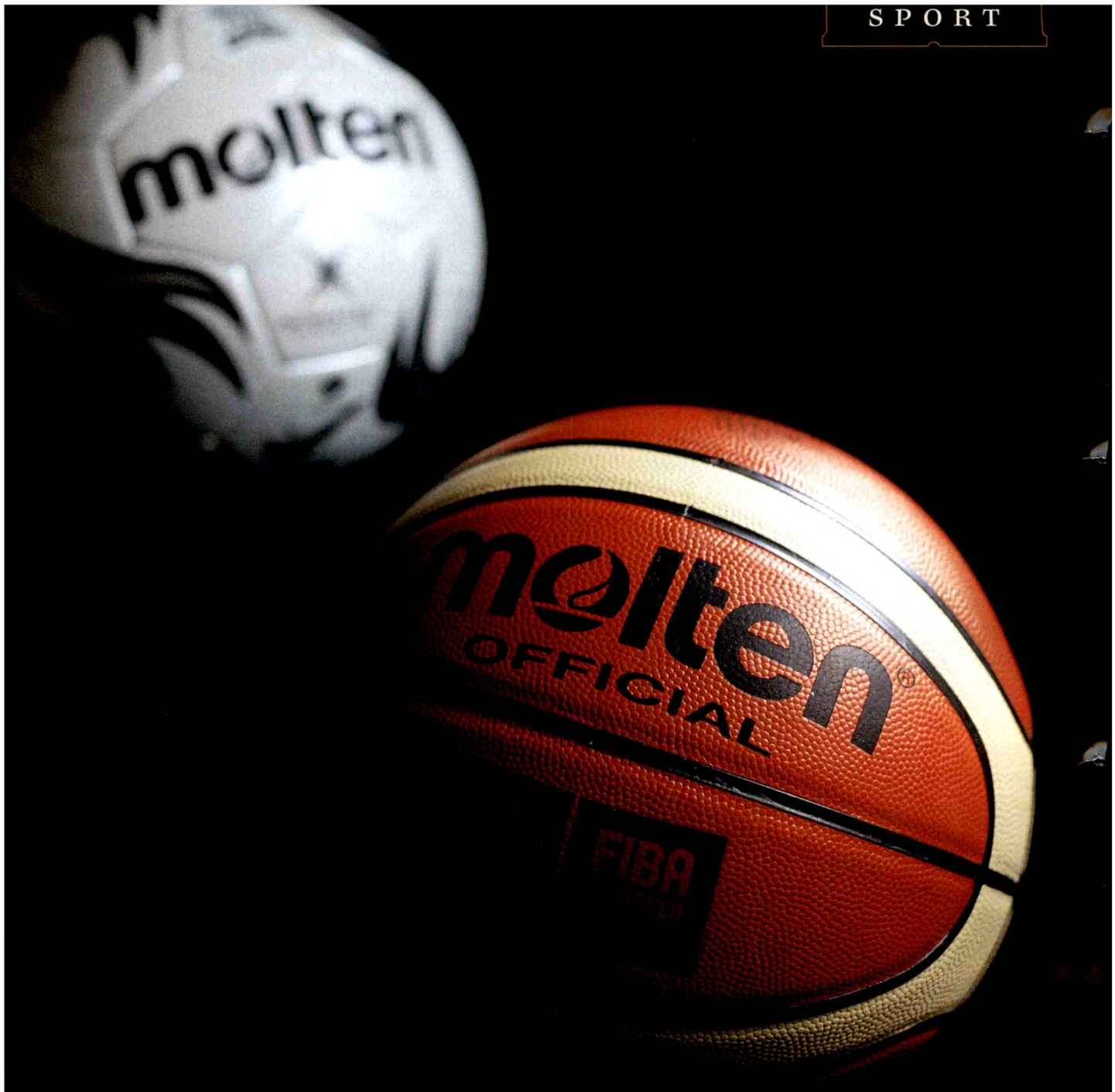
Knitted garments are usually produced by knitting separate parts based on flat patterns—the front and back body panels, and the sleeves—which are then sewn together. The WholeGarment system, which Shima Seiki developed in 1995, dispenses with the labor-intensive sewing process. The design data for the garment are fed into the knitting machine and the desired yarn is set; after that all that needs to be done is to press the start button and wait for half an hour or so until the garment is complete. Rather than simply knitting flat panels, the process produces a three-dimensional garment with the neckline and sleeves in place, and no seams. Without stitching to hold the garment together, WholeGarment knitwear is light and feels good to wear, and has smooth, unbroken silhouettes. The WholeGarment technology offers significant advantages to manufacturers as there is virtually no waste, whereas 30% of the knitted fabric used for conventional machine knitwear can be wasted as scrap material. There is also a great reduction in the labor required, making this a dream technology for fashion houses.



Shima Seiki was established in 1962 by Masahiro Shima, then just a youthful 24 years old. His aim was to develop a fully automated knitting machine to produce knitted gloves. Throughout its history the company has come up with numerous new developments, such as the computer-controlled flat knitting machine, and it has cornered some 60% of the world market in knitting machines.

"Japan's knitting industry is under threat from mass production in China and other countries," says Toshihiko Tonai of Shima Seiki's General Affairs Department. "We came up with the WholeGarment system because we wanted to revive the knitting industry in this country. Our aim is to fight back by producing high-quality items that cannot be imitated."

Evisu's head store in Osaka receives a constant stream of denim-loving young people spoilt for choice with the store's great selection.



MOLTEN

TOP PLAYERS in team sports such as basketball or soccer are often able to astound spectators with dazzling displays of skill at international sports competitions like the Olympic Games or the World Cup. And it is often the case that the balls that these players are able to use with such dexterity are made by Japanese company Molten Corporation, Inc.

Molten, which is based in Hiroshima City, is a general sports equipment manufacturer. Its particular strength is inflatable products, such as soccer and basketball balls, in which it has cornered the biggest share of the domestic market. The quality of its products is also well known overseas, and soccer leagues around the world, including teams from Italy's Serie A, use Molten balls for competition matches. In the world of basketball, not only have Molten balls been used in all Olympic matches since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, but they are now the world's top-selling basketball balls—Molten really is the world's top ball manufacturer.

A ball might seem a fairly simple object, but there is more than meets the eye. "A basketball, for example, has a raised pattern of ridges in the surface, and you might think that the bigger the ridges the easier it is to handle the ball without it slipping," says company executive Tsuneo Hirata. "But actually our company released a type of ball with the top of the ridges flattened—this greatly increased the contact between the player's fingertips and the surface of the ball, giving the player far more precise control over the way the ball moves. We believe that if the ball improves, the game can only get more exciting, so we are continually working on research and development of new, improved balls."

OLFA

◆ ◆ ◆

IF YOU LOOK around your house or workplace, there is sure to be a snap-off blade cutter somewhere. If it has the OLFA logo on it, then you have an authentic, made-in-Japan blade. OLFA, the company that first marketed the idea, is based in the city of Osaka.

The snap-off blade cutter was invented in 1956 by OLFA founder Yoshio Okada. He noticed that if you snap the end of a blade the broken end cuts just as well as a new blade, so his idea was to use this for a knife that would stay sharp. After some tricky research and development to get it just right, the world's first snap-off blade cutter was ready for the market.

"Unfortunately, it wasn't well received. When we put it on the market, people kept complaining that a breakable blade must be some kind of defective product which we were trying to palm off on them," recalls Saburo Okada, Yoshio's younger brother and former advisor to OLFA. However, the new product gradually received increasing acclaim for the superior, lasting sharpness of its blades, and the snap-off blade cutter came to be a trusted tool of carpenters, designers and the like both in Japan and abroad. OLFA has gone from strength to strength and now exports to over 100 countries. It is now the world's top manufacturer of snap-off cutters—indeed, they are often known as OLFA cutters.

There is now an amazingly wide variety of companies manufacturing and selling snap-off blade cutters around the world, but the standards set by OLFA for the length, width and angle of the blade for snapping off old sections have been adopted internationally. "In other words, the OLFA standard is the de facto global standard," says Saburo proudly. After all, as one of the pioneers of the snap-off blade cutter, maybe he is entitled to a little pride in his offspring.

KO-NIC

OLD STYLE, NEW PRODUCTS

JAPAN BRAND PROJECT

KO-NIC • *Yuzawa-komachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Artisan Villagio Inakawa, Akita Prefecture*

Lacquer ware is one of Japan's leading traditional crafts. In this collaboration with a Japanese designer living in Italy, the traditions of lacquer ware have undergone a metamorphosis into something strikingly modern. The design concept behind *ko-nic* was to match the tastes of traditional Japan with the lifestyle of modern-day urban consumers. Since its release onto the market, *ko-nic* has changed preconceived ideas about lacquer ware while opening people up to the many possibilities it offers.

JAPAN BRAND FU-DE • *Kumano Town Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hiroshima Prefecture*

The town of Kumano in Hiroshima Prefecture has gained a growing reputation overseas for its calligraphy and artists' brushes, and even French cosmetics giant Chanel uses makeup brushes from Kumano. Eight brush manufacturers from the town came together to develop the *Japan Brand Fu-De*, a line of writing brushes aimed at a Western market. These brushes are far better suited to writing Roman letters than conventional calligraphy brushes, and they are ideal for painting as well.

FU-DE

JAPAN has a wealth of outstanding art crafts, such as its famous ceramics and lacquer work that have grown from the country's long history and diverse culture.

A project was started in fiscal 2004 to actively promote these art craft products in overseas markets and build up a strong global brand for them; this was the Support Project for Promoting Japan Brand, which is being jointly implemented by the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency, and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Central Federation of Societies of Commerce and Industry.

Under this project, painstaking research is carried out into foreign markets to identify existing needs, and new products are then developed to meet these needs and

NANAKURA HANA

MAYU

NANAKURA HANA SERIES • *Saga Yamauchi Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

The *nanakura HANA* series of tableware has a cool, simple beauty that you never tire of – no matter how much you use it. The series was designed by Toshiyuki Kita, who has garnered international acclaim as an industrial designer and has works exhibited in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York. Like much of his work these simple designs completely strip away all unnecessary accoutrements, allowing the sheer white beauty of the porcelain to stand out to stunning effect.

MAYU • *Yamagata Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Yamagata Carrozzeria Project*

This pot, used for both tea and coffee, is designed with the softness of a silkworm cocoon in mind, and displays to perfection the traditional Japanese aesthetic sensibilities. You might be surprised to learn that the designer is none other than Kiyoyuki Okuyama, designer of ultra-sleek Ferrari sports cars. Typical of a car designer who always stresses functionality, he imbues the handles with the graceful linear beauty of a traditional Japanese sword while at the same time making them easy to hold.

SEIYA KAWAMOTO

launched overseas. The products make full use of both Japanese designers who have worked abroad and foreign designers during the research and product development stages; this is an important feature of the project as it gives a fresh, outside view of traditional Japanese art crafts and looks for the sort of new possibilities that may not occur to domestic designers.

As of January 2006, there were a total of 61 different brands that have been developed under this project; above, we focus on four examples – each with its own distinctive characteristic. You may well find just the thing to brighten up your own everyday life in this selection of up-to-date art crafts, which fuse together elements of traditional and modern Japan.

KEIZO OKUBO

THE SECRET OF JAPAN'S

MANUFACTURING SKILL

JAPANESE COMPANIES CONTINUALLY BRING OUT INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS—WHAT IS THE SECRET TO THEIR SUCCESS? WE ASKED WRITER TOMOHIRO KOSEKI, WHO HAS COVERED A GREAT MANY FACTORIES IN HIS WORKS.

JAPANESE MANUFACTURING underwent a huge change in the latter half of the 1970s, when there was a rapid introduction of the numerical control (NC) system into factories. NC is a system for controlling the automation of machine tools by computers, allowing the precise and efficient manufacture of large numbers of components. Up until this time, machine tools had mainly been controlled manually, but computer-controlled production soon took over as the established norm. We had entered an age in which even small factories and workshops needed NC to remain in business; there were grave predictions that soon the technical skills of craftsmen just wouldn't be needed any more.

The start of the 1990s saw the emergence of the newly industrializing countries such as China, which had plentiful, cheap labor. One after another, Japan's production bases moved overseas to these countries. In Tokyo's Ota Ward, which has always had a high concentration of small factories and workshops, there were some 8,000 factories during the 1980s; during the economic slump of the 1990s a lot of facto-

ries not reliant on skilled labor, such as press factories, lost work to China with the result that the number of factories in Ota Ward has shrunk to its present level of some 5,000.

With the loss of unskilled work to countries overseas Japan undertook a change in the structure of its manufacturing industry, becoming more specialized in producing a wider range of high-quality, precision products in smaller quantities. The result has been that in recent years emphasis has once again been placed on skilled workers—which at one stage people were predicting would become unnecessary. If we look at the auto industry as an example, the areas that still remain in Japan are those in which the technical skill of craftsmen cannot be replaced by machine code or numbers, such as the divisions manufacturing essential parts and the production bases of precision machine tools.

There can't be any small-scale factories or workshops that have not introduced NC—and perhaps more than anyone else, it is these small manufacturers who appreciate the wonder of NC. Nonetheless, you cannot survive by depending entirely on machines; the small operators have managed to find ways round this by bringing in a few distinctive ideas of their own.

One success story is Tokiwa Seiki Co., Ltd, a small manufacturing company based in Ota Ward that developed a new type of elbow. Elbows are connectors used to join pipes together, and they are widely used as machine parts in hydraulic equipment such as construction machinery. The manufacture of elbows uses technology that is already well developed, and Tokiwa Seiki found that with China and other countries becoming proficient in this technology it was up against stiff competition. Just to stay competitive, it had to reduce costs by 30%. Faced with this situation, Tokiwa Seiki came up with the novel idea of shaping the bends in elbows using a hydraulic press, thus dispensing with the stamping process that had always been used to make elbows. Tokiwa Seiki could not do this on its own, of course, so it enlisted the help of a nearby press factory and a factory making metal dies, and successfully developed the idea. The new elbows require less time, less energy and fewer resources to make, and to crown it all they perform better than conventional elbows.

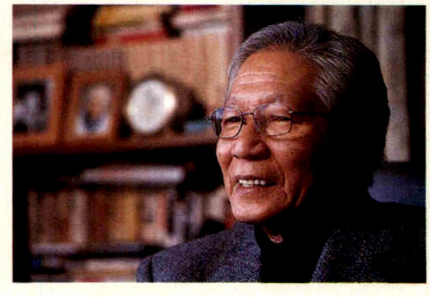
This revolutionary new idea was made possible by the strength of the community network. Within Ota Ward there are plenty of people willing to lend a hand just a bicycle ride away. All it takes is for someone to throw out an idea of something that looks like a possibility, and the local craftsmen will put their heads together to see if they can come up with something. This accumulated strength of the community network gives a whole new meaning to the expression "pedal power."

Another new idea to come out of Ota Ward is the double safety pull-top can, which was developed by Tanikei Manufacturing, a local factory. Most cans these days have pull-tabs on their tops, which means they can be opened very easily by just pulling a tab. This is a very convenient system, but the drawback is that it leaves sharp edges exposed around the top of the can and users can easily cut their fingers. In the US, which has very strict product liability laws, there were many attempts to hold the manufacturers responsible and one company alone was dealing with 1,500 complaints a year at one stage. In response to this problem, can makers around the world studied ways of making safer cans. In Japan, the can industry association put forward a considerable amount of money and asked research organizations associated with universities to come up with something. However, it was all to no avail.

Meanwhile, during the course of its normal work Tanikei Manufacturing tried out as many as 150 different types of can over a five-year period, finally producing a safe can in 1988. When this can is opened, the exposed edges fold in on themselves so that if viewed in profile they form an S-shape—this hides the sharp edges, removing all worry of cut fingers. Tanikei Manufacturing has patented its system in 17 countries, and now one in 30 cans manufactured around the world uses its system. The man behind the development of the system, company president Keiji Taniuchi, attributes its success to the skillful use of the plasticity of metal. This sounds simple enough, but in reality it is the fruit of Taniuchi's familiarity with metal and his exhaustive knowledge of the properties of materials, built up through his long years of metalworking.

This approach to invention is known these days as "process innovation." The other approach is product innovation, which requires large-scale research and development to bring out entirely new products—naturally, this is beyond the means of most small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, SMEs are well suited to process innovation, as we have seen from the examples of elbows and cans; by making some refinements to the manufacturing process of existing products, costs are kept to an absolute minimum and the product is made into something with improved functionality. Such inventions that put to use the accumulated wisdom of the workplace are indeed where Japan's SMEs demonstrate their inherent strengths. Many of these SMEs are still surviving by constantly adapting their wealth of knowledge and technological prowess to the manufacture of innovative products.

TOMOHIRO KOSEKI was born in Ota Ward, Tokyo, in 1933. After graduating from high school he worked for 50 years until 2002 as a lathe operator. Aside from his job, he has also written novels and non-fiction books about small factories. His works include *Tetsu wo Kezuru–Machi Kojo no Gijutsu* (Shaving Iron: Small Factory Techniques) and *Shokunin Ryoku* (The Power of Craftsmen).

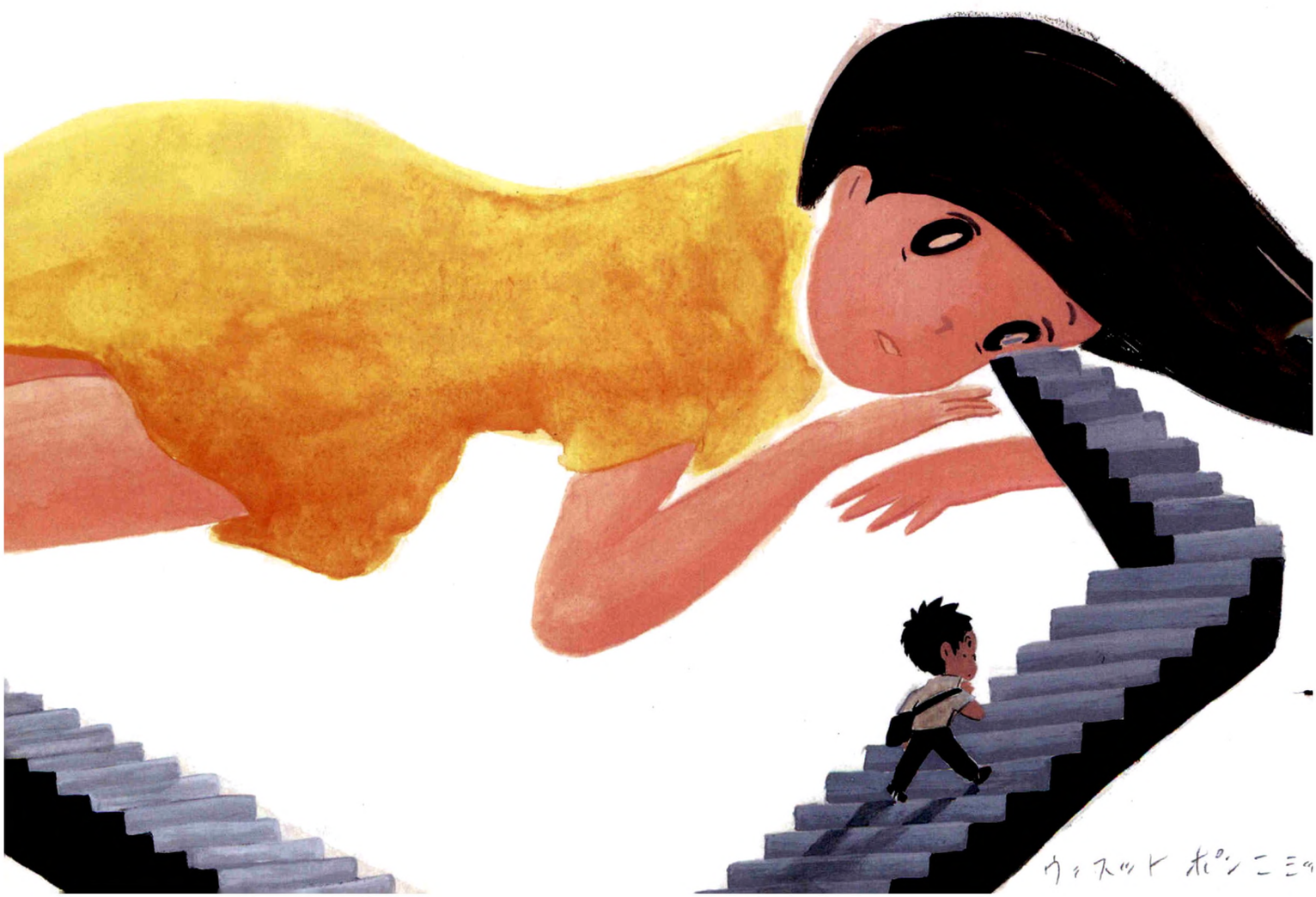


SEIYA KAWAMOTO

Hybrid Art:

Bangkok-born *manga* and *anime* artist Wisut Ponnimit's boundless talent transcends the borders of both Japan and Thailand.

JAPANESE MANGA & THAI CULTURE



KOJI FUKUNAGA

LEFT: Wisut Ponnimit at Triton Café in Kobe, backed by a work created during a "live drawing" event.

FACING & BELOW: Works by Wisut Ponnimit. Apart from his *manga* drawings, Ponnimit is active in a range of artistic fields, including animations and music.

A starry-eyed girl

orbiting space in a comet falls in love with a human boy. A youth who steals eggs from nests in order to earn extra pocket money suffers revenge by the parent birds. The stories drawn by Bangkok-born *manga* artist Wisut Ponnimit both tug at the heartstrings, but at the same time leave a surreal and somewhat abrasive aftertaste.

Ponnimit, who has lived in Japan since 2004, has made a variety of contributions to the Japanese cultural scene since his arrival. These include illustrating the cover art for Banana Yoshimoto's novel *Nankurunai*, designing T-shirts in collaboration with *FRAPBOIS*, a fashion brand popular among young people, and having his work displayed in the International Triennale of Contemporary Art Yokohama 2005.

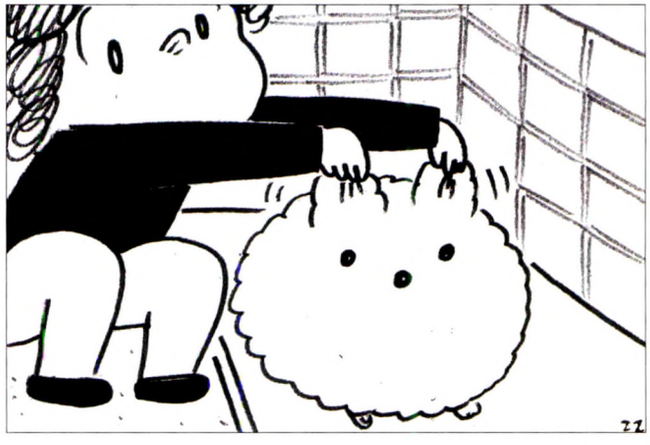
Born in the Thai capital in 1976, Ponnimit was enraptured with Japanese manga from a young age. Despite being in Bangkok, Ponnimit read many of the same titles enjoyed by Japanese children at the time, such as *Doraemon*, *Captain Tsubasa*, and *Hokuto no Ken*. Although Thailand had its own comics, so-called 'story manga' from Japan enjoyed a much greater degree of popularity among young Thai people.

Ponnimit elaborates, "In Thailand, the word 'comic' is often equated with Japanese manga. Thailand lacked specialized tools for creating comic strips, such as special manuscript pads or drawing pens. At first, I simply used the materials I had on hand and began drawing comic strips based on everyday life going on around me." Ponnimit has been active on the Thai cultural scene since 1998, and has published nine book-length comic works. As his success grew, he gradually made the decision to leave Thailand and try his luck in Japan, the "major league" of manga.

"Admitting that I wanted to become a manga artist when I was a child was, honestly speaking, rather frightening. Saying something like that in Thailand is enough to get you laughed at, and artists drawing story manga are rarely successful, simply because Japanese comics are so popular. If I succeed as a manga artist in Japan, then other Thai children can perhaps find me a useful role model, right? I also thought that just being in Japan, and breathing its air, might help me better understand why Osamu Tezuka's manga were so interesting."

"Ponnimit's work might look somewhat amateurish at first glance, but it is in fact perfect in every sense for the kinds of things he wants to draw," comments author Banana Yoshimoto. Ponnimit participated in an international group exhibition in Thailand in February 2006. Many of the street scenes appearing in these works resembled both Tokyo and Bangkok. Perhaps Ponnimit is uniquely suited to express the common atmosphere of both countries, having lived and breathed Japanese comics ever since he was a young boy.

– MAYUMI NAKAMURA



Asia's Quiet Economic Revolution

Asian economies, which sustained rapid economic growth from the 1980s through the 1990s, were called the growth center of the world economy. However, the 1997 Asian currency crisis exposed a vulnerability in the region's strength.

In July 1997, the value of the Thai baht plunged in international financial markets. As if on cue, the Philippine peso, Malaysian ringgit, and Indonesian rupiah all tumbled in turn. The unthinkable occurred: a simultaneous, rapid decline in international trust in the value in Asian currencies.

National governments were unable to respond with effective policy measures. Meanwhile, the currency 'disturbance' boiled over into an overheated currency crisis involving international investor-led speculation. In the end, economic activity within the Asian countries, centered on Southeast Asia, was severely impacted, and the crisis left serious, lingering scars.

"Currency authorities in Asian nations, including Japan, learned many lessons from the Asian currency crisis," notes Shigeki Kimura, Director of the Research Division for the Ministry of Finance's International Bureau. "Over the last twenty years, East Asian nations have built up inter-dependent relationships in finance through private-sector trade and investment. However, compared to the deep ties existing within the private sector, government efforts to develop cooperative relationships for financial policymaking had fallen behind. This is the major reason why Asian governments failed to take concerted, effective policy action to deal with the Asian currency crisis."

The currency crisis identified an acute need to rapidly develop a framework for effective international financial policy cooperation, along with the comprehensive monitoring of the financial activity of all nations in the Asian region. Based on the tough lessons learned from the crisis, two financial policy cooperation initiatives are being promoted by ASEAN +3 nations, or the ten ASEAN member countries and China, South Korea and Japan.

The first is the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), launched in August 2000. The main objective of the CMI is to serve as a safety net to prevent future currency crises. Specifically, member nations set up a network of currency swap agreements where they hold each other's currencies, through which they agree to provide mutual aid in the event of an emergency. As of the end of April 2005, 17 bilateral swap agreements (BSAs) existed between the thirteen ASEAN+3 member nations, totaling $58.3 billion. Of this total, BSAs between Japan and other countries comprised $39.5 billion of the total, indicating that Japan has pledged the greatest amount of capital support among member nations.

If the CMI can be considered as a stopgap measure for emergencies, then the Asian Bond Markets Initiative (ABMI), being promoted alongside the CMI, can be expected to make long-standing improvements in the financial systems of Asian nations to help them counter the vulnerabilities they face.

Kimura explains the reason behind the

YUKICHIKA MURAYAMA

The Asian Bond Markets Initiative (ABMI) is currently being promoted as a framework for international cooperation in financial policymaking and as a key for ensuring sustainable economic development in Asia.

LEFT: An ABMI meeting takes place at the ADB—the engine room of the ABMI.

BELOW: A group of business professionals attend an ADB seminar.

establishment of the AMBI, "Although Asian countries boasted high savings rates, financial mechanisms allowing this massive reserve of intra-regional savings to be invested within Asia were underdeveloped. Therefore, because the large amount of savings that Asian countries had amassed thanks to economic growth were invested in financial centers abroad, local firms within Asia commonly acquired necessary capital in foreign currencies, such as dollars, from overseas financial centers."

However, when using this method, a major decline in the value of a national currency on global financial markets can rapidly result in a crisis in that country's international balance of payments. Kimura stresses that this 'Achilles heel' in terms of Asia's financial situation was rapidly brought to the forefront during the Asian currency crisis.

"For this reason, the creation of a financial system to help fund sustainable Asian economic development by directly linking intra-Asian capital with Asian persons and/or corporations was an absolute necessity. ABMI is being put forward as an answer to these needs."

Generally, bonds are a type of investment security issued as proof that the borrower, or party in need of funds, promises to repay the amount borrowed plus interest. There are several types of bonds, including public debt securities issued by local governments, corporate bonds issued by private sector firms, and others. However, government bonds issued by national governments play the most important role in bond markets. Why is this? When public or corporate bonds are issued, setting a credible interest rate that correctly informs investors of the profit and risk from their investment is vital. When setting interest rates of this type, the interest rate on bonds issued by the government is used as a benchmark.

Kimura elaborates, "However, at the time of the currency crisis, no large-scale bond markets capable of serving as a benchmark existed in Asian countries, resulting in a failure of the bond market to develop. For this reason, ASEAN+3 member nations continue to make efforts to develop bond markets for debt securities denominated in their own currencies, toward the near-term goal of promoting healthy government bond markets. As part of these efforts, the Japanese government has worked closely with the Asia Development Bank (ADB), whose main mission is the economic development of the Asian region, in a variety of cooperative efforts, including providing capital, support for the establishment of markets and offering expertise regarding bond issue procedures."

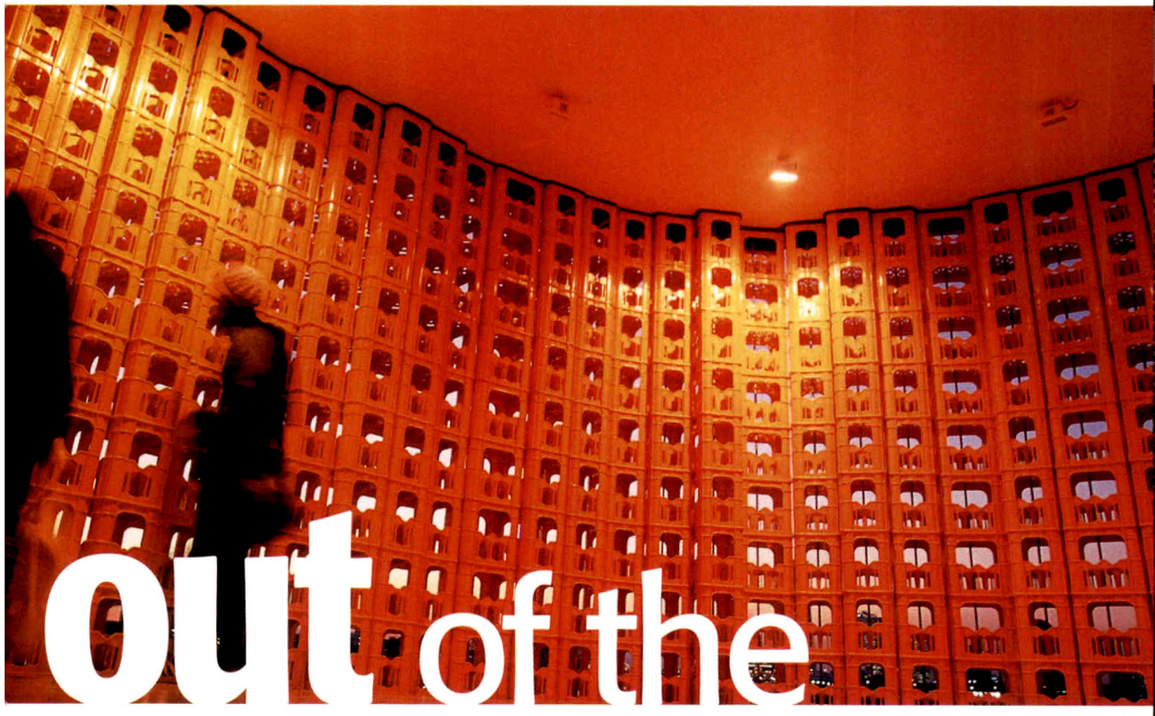
Now, the efforts by various nations are gradually coming to fruition. In December 1997, during the midst of the Asian currency crisis, the total amount of local-currency denominated bonds issued in major Asian countries totaled $361.1 billion. In March 2005, this figure had increased four-fold to $1.482 trillion. Bonds issued in Indonesia, which suffered most heavily during the currency crisis, rose from $4.5 billion to $52.8 billion (more than ten-fold) during the same period, while bonds issued in Thailand increased from $10.6 billion to $71.5 billion, nearly seven-fold.

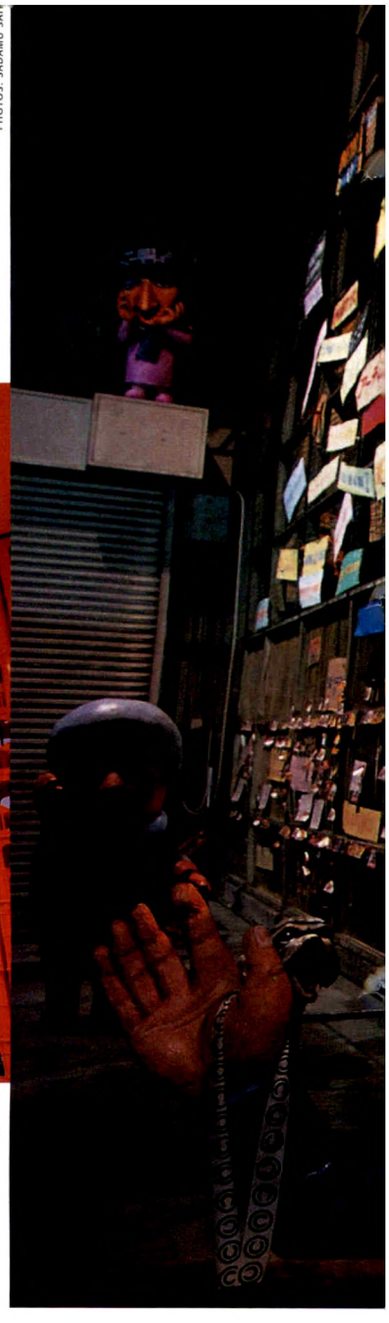
Going forward, what will be necessary to keep the ABMI, which has gotten off to such a favorable start, moving ahead smoothly? Masahiro Kawai, who serves as Head of the ADB's Office of Regional Economic Integration and also as Special Advisor to the President, explains, "The future of the ABMI depends on whether it can establish the necessary market transparency and credibility to attract investment from both within Asia and around the world. Toward this end, in addition to issuing attractive debt products for investors, efforts such as establishing a reliable credit rating institution for the Asian bond market and enhancing the international settlement system should make the ABMI even more desirable. In these areas, Japan can utilize its own track record to provide the rest of Asia with a favorable example to follow."

– TADAHIRO OHKOSHI

JUNICHI WAJIMA

The International Triennale of Contemporary Art Yokohama 2005 was held from September 28 to December 18, 2005, attracting eighty-six artists from thirty different countries and regions.





PHOTOS: SADAMU SAITO

out of the ORDINARY

Some museum fans might have been left a bit speechless upon their first glimpse of the Triennale's rough decor, which resembled more of a construction site than an orderly gallery displaying fine art.

The exhibition was held in two giant warehouses at the tip of Yokohama's Yamashita Wharf, surrounded by mountains of shipping containers and forklifts whirring about.

Stepping into the warehouse and gazing at the works on display only strengthened the feeling that one had stumbled onto a giant construction site. A giant pile of steel pipes resembling a gate greeted guests at the entrance, which was in fact a sculpture by Keiichi Ikemizu. *Soi Project*, a collection of works by Thai artists, was housed in a kind of temporary shack, looking as if it had been haphazardly thrown together the day before.

However, unlike a construction site, there were no "Under Construction!" signs, and certainly no out-of-bounds areas. If anything, the space encouraged visitors to cross its thresholds and explore at will, even daring one to run around and play like a child.

The exhibition included a giant soccer game (Japan's KOSUGE 1-16, Atelier Bow-Wow, and YOKOCOM), ping-pong tables (Japan's COUMA), and even a gambling spot ('©uratorman, Inc.' from Thailand). Of course, all of these were exhibited artworks. Young couples could be seen enthusiastically enjoying the games, having forgotten their well-meaning intentions of art appreciation. Elementary school students led by their teachers soon realized that today's field trip was a little different from the average, boring museum tour of the masterpieces, and were soon running around shouting in anticipation at the thrilling pieces on view. In contrast to the first Yokohama Triennale in 2001, which featured such famous artists as Yayoi Kusama or Yoko Ono, the 2005 Triennale aimed to achieve a more casual atmosphere allowing guests to get 'up close and personal' with the works on display.

Far left: German artists Wolfgang Winter and Berthold Hörbelt's sculpture built out of stacked beer crates.

Above: Thai artist Navin Rawanchaikul's (©uratorman) piece, *Super(M)art*. Visitors were able to participate in the game-like exhibit, which pokes fun at the global art market.

The materials used to create the exhibited works also encouraged an accessible mood. Examples include a house created out of stacked beer cases by German artists Wolfgang Winter and Berthold Hörbelt, animals made out of carpet shag by Brazilian artist Tonico Lemos Auad, and plants cut out of shopping bags by Japanese artist Yuken Teruya. The artists' transformation of the everyday into the spectacular is as nimble as an acrobat's, well fitting the exhibition's theme of an *Art Circus: Jumping from the Ordinary*.

"Some visitors even commented that they felt they could have created the artwork on display," notes contemporary artist Tadashi Kawamata, who also served as general director for the exhibition. "We worked to ensure that there were as few barriers as possible between the creators and viewers of the artworks on display in this show. The works themselves evolve as guests interact with them, a phenomenon very much in line with our aim to create an exhibition that was truly a 'work-in-progress.'

Kawamata's thinking regarding the concept of an international art exhibition was quite flexible, and not tied up in stereotypes. As he explains, "Right now, there is a boom in international art exhibitions in Asia, including Yokohama, Kwangju, Busan, Shanghai, Beijing and Taipei. I'm of course not criticizing this, but if countries place too much emphasis on minor differences, the domestic art scene may become too introverted. If anything, a networked international expo might be possible in the future, with simultaneous exhibitions held in many countries with a common theme."

Perhaps we might see a worldwide 'art circus' held in the future across Asia. The International Triennale of Contemporary Art Yokohama 2005 could be the first step in this international effort. ■ – SHIN'ICHI OKADA

Never Too Young

Beauty journalist Mayumi Kurata introduces hot beauty trends among Japan's young people.

Take me to Shibuya – I must see the *kogyaru!*" Around the late 1990s, almost every foreign stylist and makeup artist visiting Japan was uttering these words. At the time, Shibuya's central shopping avenue was crowded with the teenage girls that made this phrase part of the cultural lingo. Their thick, caked-on foundation, whitish exaggerated makeup more suited to kabuki actors, and overblown hairstyles were certainly not beautiful, but the extreme styles favored by these young girls captured the imagination of a number of overseas artists.

Makeup, of course, was originally intended to accentuate one's individuality and attractiveness, and also served as a tool to maintain a positive relationship between society and the individual. In Japan, woman have long been expected to always wear makeup when leaving their homes. Wearing makeup allowed one to present a positive image of oneself to others.

From this perspective, the mask-like kogyaru makeup in fact hides a girl's individuality as if to negate the relationship between her and society. Proving this point, at the height of their popularity, kogyaru actually got a kind of thrill out of being viewed as frightening or strange-looking by adults. Kogyaru also made fast friends with each other, and their special makeup actually generated a sense of camaraderie among their ranks, and acted almost like a uniform of sorts.

There is a strong trend within Japanese beauty toward eliminating individuality instead of accentuating the finer points of one's physical features. The accepted norm has always been to change oneself to suit a standardized ideal. The essentially Japanese concept that conforming to a standard is better than being a standout seems to have influenced the Japanese concept of beauty as well. The kogyaru teenagers had, at the least, their uniform makeup in common, which could even be called the antithesis of adult style.

The kogyaru of the late 1990s have now aged into regular housewives or working women, and the famous Shibuya scene is now a thing of the past. However, more and more girls under the age of twenty are wearing makeup, and are starting at even younger ages. High school students, middle and even elementary school students are extremely interested in makeup. A leading toy manufacturer has even launched a line of cosmetic products that can safely be applied to children's skin. While the extreme kogyaru makeup has been largely disregarded, a bright-eyed look, complete with curled eyelashes and mascara, is currently proving very popular. Even this, though, can be said to be an attempt to create a uniformly cute, doll-like appearance which deemphasizes the individual.

Over the past few years, sales of skincare products have far outpaced those of makeup in the Japanese cosmetics market. However, younger consumers in their teens and early twenties are unlikely to suffer from any particular skin-related worries, and also have a limited budget to spend on beauty items. Accordingly, most appear to be allocating a higher percentage of their money to makeup items. The makeup lines branded by famous fashion designers favored by these young consumers, including Anna Sui, Jill Stuart, and Paul & Joe, were in fact all planned by Japanese cosmetics manufacturers and produced in Japan. Looking over the array of products sold in much the same way as home furnishings or decorative items, makeup seems to be marketed increasingly as a toy for young girls. Japan's cute "toy cosmetics," which are now so popular they are being exported abroad, may soon be stealing the hearts of teenagers the world over.

> "...there is a strong trend within Japanese beauty toward **eliminating individuality instead of accentuating it**"

A beauty journalist for more than 20 years, **MAYUMI KURATA** currently writes for the beauty sections in women's magazines and a national daily newspaper.

BEAUTY MALL EXCITE (AKASAKA, TOKYO) GENEROUSLY COOPERATED WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THIS ARTICLE. • PHOTO: TAKAHIRO SAKUMA

LIFESTYLE

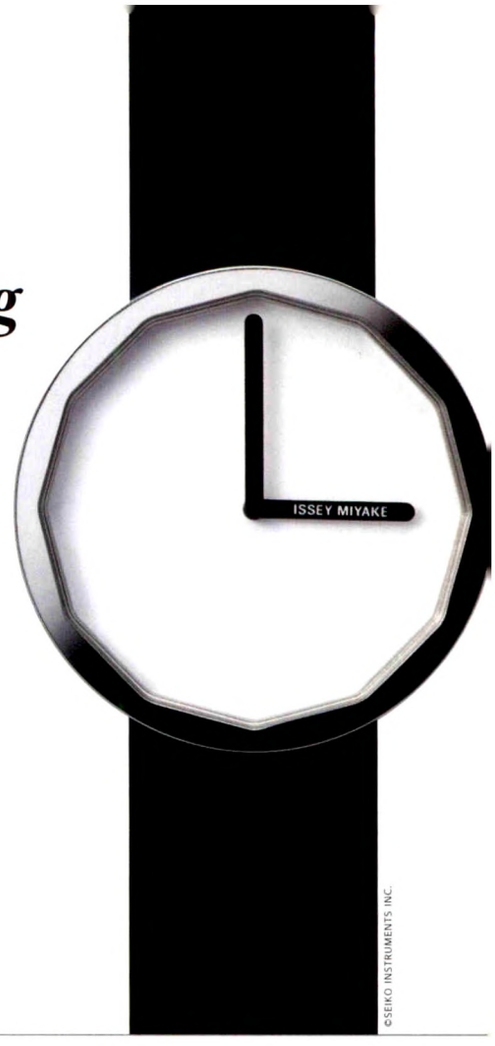
©INAX CORPORATION

New Style Tile

INAX Corporation, a designer and manufacturer of bathroom and kitchen fixtures and furnishings, has launched a new line of decorative tiles entitled *Beans*. Created in collaboration with an architectural workshop, the new tiles are, as implied by the name, bean-shaped. The tile shape was inspired by Japanese *tamaishi*, or cobblestones, which are used in foundations of wooden architecture. The designers aimed to break down the stereotype of tiles as square to create new, unique spaces. The contrast between the tile pieces and masonry accentuates the feel of the material. The tiles come in four sizes and four colors: light blue, yellow, red and white. These new tiles certainly promise to make bath time a lot more entertaining.

Redefining Time

A new wristwatch, *Twelve*, has emerged from the Issey Miyake-produced Seiko Instrument Inc. 'watch project.' Created by one of Japan's most widely acclaimed product designers, Naoto Fukasawa, the watch's construction is extremely simple, featuring neither numbers nor a scale on its face. As Fukasawa comments, "I wanted to design both a simple and strong watch." The twelve-sided glass frame and thick hands display the time. In total, six models are available as part of the Twelve line, including white or blue face colors and different frame material types.



©SEIKO INSTRUMENTS INC.

Universal Scissors

Looking for an elegant, stylish design and sharp, reliable cutting edge on your scissors? These are the tool you've been waiting for! Even more remarkable, both left- and right-handed persons can use the scissors, which incorporate the elements of universal design. The scissors were launched as part of the new brand *Craft Design Technology*, featuring a total of 21 items in the first group of products. Eight well-known office equipment manufacturers joined the effort, supplying products in their varied areas of expertise. The concept behind the brand was to "create beautiful, classic objects suited to modern tastes, and opportunities to experience them." The brand aims to maximize the contributions of Japan's world-renowned quality and technological expertise, and will expand to include not only office items, but products related to a broad range of living areas in the future.

©CRAFT DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Exploring Values

The Alternative Paradise exhibition, which explores the contemporary values of "crafts" across genres, is currently underway at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa and runs until March 5, 2006. Arts and crafts have an undeniable place in the art world, which cannot be narrowly defined by the concepts of Western art and design. Works by eleven artists from Japan and other countries are featured, focusing on the relationship between materials and expression. The exhibition also includes the *T-room* project directed by architect Kengo Kuma, a contemporary reinterpretation of the classic Japanese tea room. The project is an attempt to envision the tea ceremony as a series of actions carried out over the passage of time. Various materials used in the exhibition such as water, sound, light, earth, wood, hair and visual images interact with one another across the usual artistic boundaries.

Prime Minister Koizumi Visits Turkey

PHOTOS: CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

Prime Minister Koizumi at the Blue Mosque

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Republic of Turkey from January 9 to 13. He is only the second serving Japanese prime minister to make an official visit since relations were established between the two countries 115 years ago.

Prime Minister Koizumi arrived in the capital city of Ankara on the evening of January 9. The following morning he visited the Ataturk Memorial commemorating Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the first President of Turkey, where he made an offering of flowers. In the afternoon, Prime Minister Koizumi met with Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the President of Turkey, and then attended a welcome ceremony at the Office of the Prime Minister. After that he held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. During these talks, Prime Minister Koizumi announced that Japan would consider holding commemorative events in Turkey in 2010—the 120th anniversary of Japan-Turkey friendly relations. In addition, the leaders agreed to consider concrete efforts for cooperation regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue and the reconstruction of Iraq. Furthermore, the leaders voiced their shared recognition that both countries would work together on the critical issues facing the international community including Iran's nuclear issue, the reform of the United Nations Security Council and measures against international terrorism.

The next day, January 11, Prime Minister Koizumi visited the Turkish-Japanese Foundation Culture Center in Ankara and observed people learning the Japanese language and engaging in such cultural activities as origami.

On the morning of January 12, Prime Minister Koizumi met with Mr. Ali Ozdemir, a former pilot with Turkish Airlines, at a hotel in Istanbul. Mr. Ozdemir was the pilot of the special flight dispatched to rescue approximately 250 Japanese nationals living in Tehran, Iran in March 1985 during the Iran-Iraq War, in response to the request of the Government of Japan. Prime Minister Koizumi said, "If you had not agreed to carry out this task, those people may not have been rescued. I am happy to be able to express our appreciation as Prime Minister of Japan." In response, reflecting on the events of the time, Mr. Ozdemir said, " I am greatly honored. It was my duty to rescue the Japanese nationals."

After that, Prime Minister Koizumi observed the construction site where a railroad tunnel under the Bosporus Straits separating Europe and Asia is under development thanks to large-scale yen loans. Prime Minister Koizumi offered words of encouragement to the Japanese people involved in the construction.

In the afternoon, Prime Minister Koizumi completed his schedule with a trip to the old city district of Istanbul where he visited the Ayasofya Mosque and the Blue Mosque.

Japan-Turkey Summit Meeting

NEWS

Exporting Foodstuffs

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has launched a large-scale promotion campaign in an effort to expand exports of Japanese agricultural, forestry and marine products and foodstuffs. The overall aim is to double the value of exports in the five-year period from 2004 to 2009.

Against the background of a worldwide boom in Japanese food products, its high-quality, safe and healthy image greatly increases its export potential. In recent years the value of exports—centered upon fresh fruit and marine products—has continued to increase. A breakdown reveals that 40% of exports is made up of marine products and slightly less than 30% is delicatessen-type foodstuffs. MAFF helps create and expand markets, remove barriers to exports and provides comprehensive support on matters of intellectual property rights and branding. MAFF has also designed a logo-mark using the Japanese word "oishii," meaning "delicious." Written in a traditional calligraphic style, the logo-mark gives a bold impression of Japaneseness. Promotional literature has been produced in three languages: Thai, simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese, indicating that the aim is to make an immediate impact in the countries and regions where the export drive is focused.

Avian Influenza Conference

On January 12 and 13 the Tokyo Conference on Early Response to Potential Influenza Pandemic was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Jointly sponsored by the Government of Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the conference was attended by approximately 130 specialists from 23 countries (mainly from the Asian region), six international organizations and a range of health and medical organizations from Japan and overseas. Those attending the various sessions and discussions exchanged opinions on the early response to the spread of the virus among humans and measures to contain the potential pandemic. It was decided that priority should be given to strengthening the capability of each country to respond quickly to contain the virus. The two-day conference closed by adopting recommendations regarding the legal issues surrounding the implementation of early containment measures and the establishment of groups to create specific action plans.

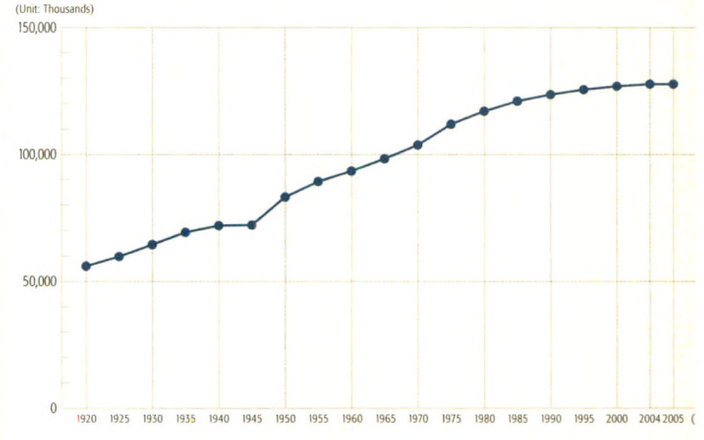
Declining Population

The total population of Japan has begun to embark on a downward trend. Barring the decrease in 1945 due to the impact of the Second World War, this is the first population decrease since census records commenced in 1920. Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications Heizo Takenaka released this information on December 27, 2005 in a preliminary report on the results of last year's census. Population figures are calculated using the national census figures produced every five years and during the interim years is calculated on the basis of estimates of natural fluctuation and migration.

"Total population" represents the number of people, including foreigners (those residing for more than three months, but excluding diplomatic staff) who live in Japan. Japan's population peaked in December 2004 at 127,830,000, but declined to 127,760,000 in 2005. A survey of population dynamics already released by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare showed that the natural fluctuation represented by the number of births over deaths produced a negative figure for the first time, indicating that Japan's population has started to move into decline. The government and the people of Japan must now work together on measures to deal with a declining birthrate—as it is feared that, in the future, this will place an intolerable burden on the social welfare system.

Trends in the Census Population

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications



NEWS

Asia-Pacific Youth Forum

JAPAN FOUNDATION

Between January 14 and 24 the Asia-Pacific Youth Forum 2006 was held in Okinawa Prefecture. The forum invites young leaders to Japan from countries of the Asia-Pacific region, encouraging them to step beyond the constraints of language, religion and differences in values, and discuss common problems with Japanese representatives. The recent forum was the eleventh such forum and was jointly sponsored by the Japan Foundation and the Okinawa Prefectural Government. It was attended by 19 young specialists working in academia, government, politics and journalism in 15 countries across the Asia-Pacific region.

The forum featured a program of exchange seminars held around Okinawa Prefecture in which the participants took part in enthusiastic discussion on the topic of "Negotiating Diversity—Challenge to Global Citizenship." There were also opportunities for exchanges with local residents and the final event of the forum was an open seminar aimed mainly at students from Okinawa Prefecture.

Human Resource Development Project

ISUZU MOTORS LTD.

A human resources development project will commence this year in the Thai automotive industry. The project represents one area of cooperation occurring under the Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement agreed to in principle last September. In December, four Japanese and Thai organizations, including JETRO Bangkok and the Thai Ministry of Industry, issued a memorandum of understanding on the Thai Automotive Human Resources Development Project (TAHRDP) designed to strengthen ties between Japan and Thailand.

In 2005, Thailand became the first Southeast Asian country to manufacture more than one million vehicles per year. Most were of the distinctive "pickup truck" variety *(photo above)*—vehicles with an uncovered flat-deck and a protruding bonnet. The Thai automotive industry is now looking for quality engineers to enable it to fulfill its goal of becoming the "Detroit of Asia." At the same time, Japanese automobile manufacturers are expanding investment in Thailand as a base for manufacturing and research and development. In keeping with the memorandum on TAHRDP, billions of yen will be spent on developing hundreds of Thai instructors and producing training programs for thousands of others.

KOIZUMI CABINET *e-mail magazine*

The weekly Koizumi Cabinet E-mail Magazine is available free of charge in English to subscribers. Each issue contains a message from Prime Minister Koizumi and other information about the government.

FOR SUBSCRIPTION INFO ➤

http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/m-magazine/index.html

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS:

➤ *January 12*

Prime Minister Koizumi began his first message of 2006 by wishing his readers a Happy New Year. The first installment of this year's e-mail magazine came directly from Turkey, where Koizumi met with President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The leaders held frank and candid discussions on the cooperation between Japan and Turkey toward the Middle East peace process, international terrorism and reconstruction assistance in Iraq.

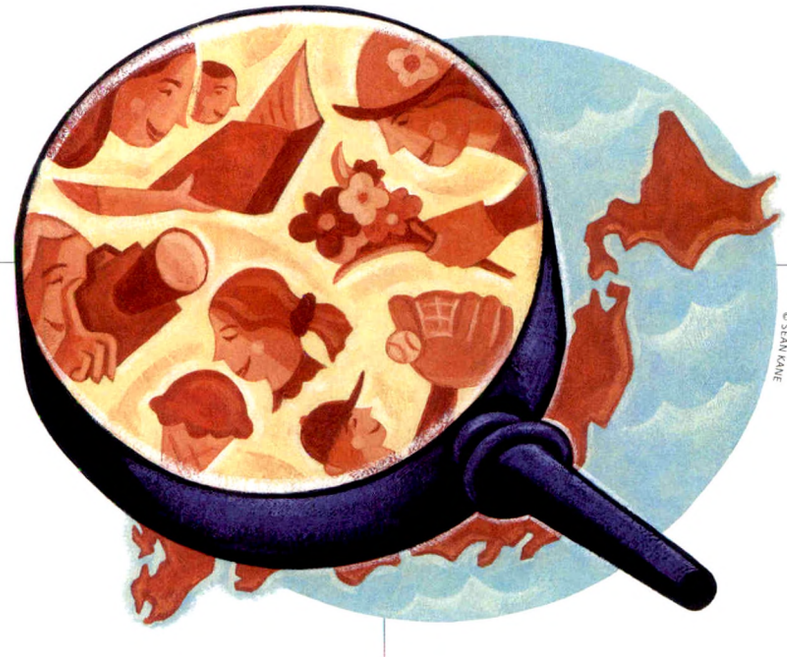
➤ *January 19*

Koizumi expressed his deep concern over the recent record snowfall levels over much of Japan, and stated that he had directed local authorities and the emergency services to be prepared to respond quickly, particularly given that heavy snowfalls are expected to continue for some time. He also noted that he had recently visited two small- and medium-sized enterprises in Tokyo and was much encouraged with the manufacturing technologies of these companies.

➤ *January 26*

Last week the Prime Minister delivered his final general policy speech at the plenary sessions of the Upper and Lower Houses of the Diet before his current term of office ends in September this year. He reiterated his commitment to carrying out his program of reforms before handing over the reins to his successor. Koizumi also extended words of encouragement to the athletes of the Japanese Olympic team before their departure to Turin for the Olympic Winter Games.

Middle-class Consciousness



It was not so long ago that Japan was often referred to as a middle-class society of over 100 million people. The high level of social and economic parity enjoyed by Japanese people and Japan's social integration were the envy of many countries – including many European countries which have long been plagued by the societal upheavals brought about high unemployment.

However, in more recent times Japan has been witnessing an undercurrent of dissatisfaction. The Japanese media has been referring to Japanese society using such expressions as "the emergence of a lower-class society" and "unequal society." There have even been a number of best-selling books which assert several disparities that are assailing Japanese society.

The *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper, one of the five major daily newspapers in Japan, conducted a related survey in January this year in which 71% of respondents felt that large disparities in incomes would continue well into the future. Most respondents felt that these disparities were largely due to those who have been making huge profits from IT-related businesses, while at the same time the restructuring being undertaken by many companies was causing great hardship among large numbers of workers.

However, the results of a survey carried out by the Cabinet Office in June and July of last year show the situation in a completely different light.

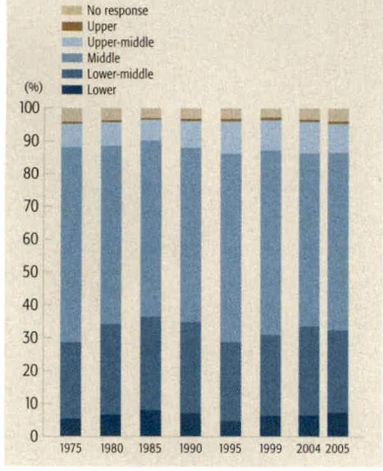
When posed the question, "Compared to the rest of Japanese society, what social and economic class do you consider yourself to be?" The highest response at 54.2% was "Middle-class." The second highest response at 25.1% was "Lower-middle-class." Of all respondents to this question, almost 90% felt themselves to be middle-class, upper-middle-class or lower-middle-class. Some 7.3% of respondents felt that they were lower-class, while less than 1% thought of themselves as upper-class. Looking at the longer-term figures, the majority of Japanese people over the past twenty years have considered themselves as middle-class *(see graph left)*.

When asked if they felt that their standard of living had improved compared to the previous year, a majority of 68.9% stated that it was about the same, while 26.1% felt that it was worse. Compared to an earlier survey, the percentage of respondents who felt that their standard of living was about the same as the previous year showed an upward trend, while those who felt that their standard of living was worse than the previous year showed a downward trend *(see graph right)*.

The results of this survey clearly show that the Japanese people's belief that they are all fairly middle-class, and that large-scale disparities do not exist remains firm – thanks possibly to the recent economic recovery. Or maybe it's that Japanese people look at the world with a cool head and have a firm grasp on reality.

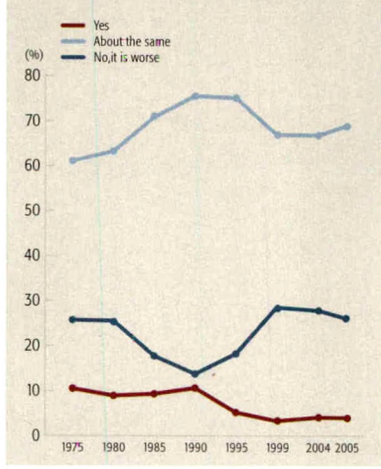
What social class do you consider yourself to be?

Source: Cabinet Office Standard of Living Survey

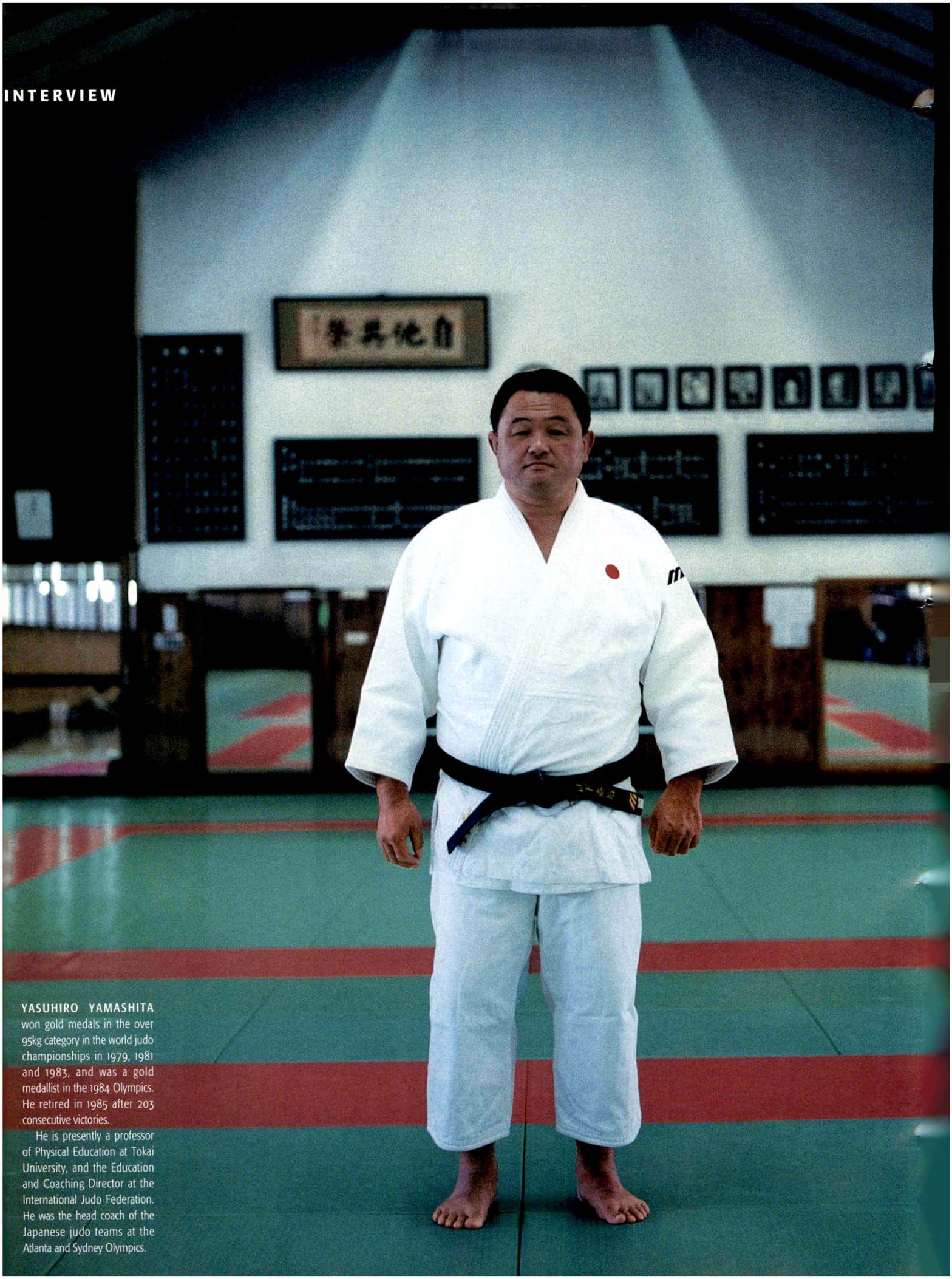


Has your standard of living improved compared to last year?

Source: Cabinet Office Standard of Living Survey



GRAPHICS: GO IZUKA



YASUHIRO YAMASHITA won gold medals in the over 95kg category in the world judo championships in 1979, 1981 and 1983, and was a gold medallist in the 1984 Olympics. He retired in 1985 after 203 consecutive victories.

He is presently a professor of Physical Education at Tokai University, and the Education and Coaching Director at the International Judo Federation. He was the head coach of the Japanese judo teams at the Atlanta and Sydney Olympics.

YASUHIRO Yamashita

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOSHIYUKI SASHO

With its fascinating combination of strength and educational content, the martial art of judo has become a global sport. Yasuhiro Yamashita, a leading figure in both in the Japanese and international judo arenas, gives his views on how judo will meet the challenges of the 21st century.

How far has the globalization of judo progressed?

At present, 195 countries have joined the International Judo Federation, and the numbers of competitors that compete in judo in the Olympics are only exceeded by those in athletics and football. The Olympic Games features five martial arts events: fencing, boxing, taekwondo, wrestling and judo. Of these, by far the most popular in terms of active participants is judo. Olympic medalists in judo represent a wide range of nations, and I think that judo is probably the most global of all the martial arts.

At the moment there are official investigations looking at the possibility of removing baseball and softball from the list of Olympic events from the London games in 2012, but certainly judo has no such problem. When I met the President of the International Olympic Committee, Jacques Rogge, he said that he felt that even when the judges had made a mistake in judo, the competitors do not forget their sense of respect toward their opponents. Mr. Rogge went on to say that this kind of sporting attitude is very rare in Olympic events, and that he would like people to continue to value these qualities. In addition, those who compete in judo are rarely found guilty of doping offences, and the sport of judo, which originated in Japan, is building a reputation as a modern, popular and global sport.

And yet, I understand that judo is not so popular in the United States, which is the most powerful nation in the world of sport. Is this really so?

In the United States, karate and taekwondo are more popular than judo. It seems that there has not been any live television coverage of judo from the Olympic Games since the Los Angeles games of 1984, which was when I won a gold medal. This means that judo is considered a minor sport in the United States.

How can this situation be changed, and what is required to make the sport of judo more popular in the US? I once put these questions to a vice-president of the giant media corporation, NBC. The answers that I got at that time included the need for the terminology of judo to be changed to English, that the competitors should show their emotions more, and that the *nagewaza* throwing techniques should have a points system.

In recent years, judo has been taking steps to make itself more easily understood by a global audience. These steps include the introduction of colored judo suits and the extension of matches. However, there is no need to suggest that the English language is better than Japanese in order for Americans to understand the sport more easily.

I believe that the essence of judo should be protected at all costs. This essence is composed of, "Japanese language," "courtesy and respect toward one's opponent" and an "attitude that sets great value on the *Ippon* (throw-down which finishes the bout) technique." If these vital aspects of judo are lost, then the sport loses all the values that it has come to represent. In particular, I believe that the values of courtesy and respect are a most important foundation of the sport. In judo, even if you are victorious, you should avoid all temptation to show off, or to celebrate, and should maintain self-restraint and composure.

Why is that?

In judo, compassion and sympathy are regarded as important. This way of thinking comes from *bushido*, the moral code of the samurai, which states that one should warmly offer one's hand in sympathy toward the weak and those in despair. Also, in judo, the opponent is never to be thought of as the enemy. If you have an opponent, then you have the opportunity to improve and to grow as a competitor. This means that we are always taught to hold on to the notion of respect toward our opponents.

"Courtesy" is the form that this notion takes in our way of behaving. It is not enough simply to attach importance to the defeat of the opponent. In addition, it is vital to show respect toward one's opponent through courtesy, and this is the true essence of judo. A judo match begins and ends with a *rei* (the bow). I think it likely this structure is unique amongst Olympic sports.

How did judo achieve its current status?

Professor Jigoro Kano (1860–1938) was the original founder of judo, and was the first member of the IOC to be elected from Asia in 1909. His aim was to improve the body and the mind through judo, and in so doing to help people be of service to their society. He envisaged judo as having a high educational value, and brought together many *jujitsu* schools. He added the suffix "*do*," meaning "way of," according to the principles of the laws of nature, and so judo was born.

Until that time, jujitsu concentrated on the techniques of self-defense, with no consideration for educational value. However, Professor Kano introduced elements taken from a number of Eastern and Western philosophers, including the English philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) and his 1861 work *Education*, to create a sense of how to live in a spirit that was truly Japanese.

At that time, *kendo* (Japanese fencing), *karate-do*, *aikido*, *sado* (tea ceremony), *kado* (flower arrangement) and *kyudo* (archery) were already in existence in Japan but none of them had the suffix "do," as part of their names. This changed after the creation of judo. It can be said that Professor Kano's original purpose for judo was as a method of learning techniques as well as a guiding philosophy for leading one's life. And this also influenced other aspects of culture.

Is the spirit of Jigoro Kano still with us today?

I would like to answer, "Of course!" However, I don't think that this is the case. Judo became an official Olympic sport in 1964. The victor in the open weight division was Anton Geesink from the Netherlands. Since that time, the target of the Japanese judo world has been to win at these world events, and in more recent times this has become an obsession. However, in reality it has become extremely difficult to win. At the Seoul Olympics of 1988, Japan won only one gold medal, and the judo world in Japan became very concerned that the day was approaching when Japan would not win any gold medals at all. As this situation developed, the important spiritual base of judo was neglected, and the trend toward thinking only about victory or defeat moved the sport away from the position that its founder had originally intended.

If you aim to win while challenging your own limits, then that is wonderful. If this also improves the person as a human being then that is ideal. However, this was gradually replaced by the view that a person who cannot win at judo should not express his views on how judo should be, and that it is meaningless if you do not achieve successful results.

That was a time of crisis for judo, wasn't it?

Yes, indeed. However, it was also true that before this there was anxiety in the world of judo as to whether the sport had aimed at something false despite its form. Jigoro Kano used to say that, "Tradition does not mean inheriting only form, but inheriting the spirit that underpinned that tradition." And this particular saying of his is a personal favorite of mine.

I checked these words in order to try and answer my own questions about the state of judo. Are the proponents of modern judo the true inheritors of the sport? Do we pursue only victory or defeat? Or do we pursue only the form of the sport as we perceive it? Isn't there a need for us to think again in depth about the ideology and purpose of judo? I have been making my views on these issues clear to the judo authorities for 10 years now.

As we entered the 21st century, in 2001 a "Judo Renaissance" occurred in which the Japanese judo world united. This is a movement for returning to the origins of the founding ideas, and once more setting great value on the educational aspects of the sport. This movement is in line with what I had been advocating over the previous 10 years, and I have been deeply involved in this present renaissance.

You are a prominent figure in the world of Japanese judo, and currently serve as the Director of Education at the International Judo Federation. Is the judo renaissance that you have described spreading across the globe?

When I was elected as Director of Education, I made three pledges. The first was to make judo more dynamic and attractive as an Olympic sport. The second was to do my best to spread and develop judo worldwide. This means supporting less wealthy nations by dispatching coaches overseas and sending judo clothing for

practice. Thirdly, I pledged to respect and promote the educational value of judo. In other words, I would like the world to recognize the spirit of judo that Professor Kano originally intended.

With regard to the third pledge, there was an incident that gave me considerable pause for thought. This was a meeting with the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. I met Mr. Putin with Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi at the 300th anniversary of the establishment of St. Petersburg in 2003. Our meeting took place at the *dojo* (judo hall) where President Putin used to practice in his younger days. The day after our meeting, Japan's national broadcast service, NHK, screened an interview with President Putin. After having returned to Japan, I saw the interview and I was genuinely surprised. President Putin clearly stated, "Judo is not simply a sport, it is also my political philosophy. It is the basis of how to envisage the world, and of how to build relations with the opposition in politics".

The President also stated, "Judo changed my life. I trained physically in order to be a tough kid. I had tried boxing and wrestling, but finally I discovered judo. This was a turning point. Judo changed my way of thinking, my view of life, and my interactions with other people. I have a rather short temper, and was the type of person to react angrily. However, I learned that this does not bring desirable results in judo. It is important to control your mind because when you are calm and mentally balanced you can deal more effectively with any situation. These were the valuable lessons that I learned from judo."

I watched this video many times with a feeling of warmth. When I compared myself with President Putin, I thought that as I had reached the top of the competitive world of judo I was far stronger than President Putin who had only achieved the black-belt, sixth grade. However, I realized that when it came to the essence of judo, President Putin had learned far more than I had. What was important was not only to master the techniques of judo, but to translate the lessons of judo into one's own life and put that philosophy to practical use. This is in line with the ideas of Professor Kano.

Meeting President Putin confirmed my belief that it is important to promote the renaissance of judo around the world, but that it is also necessary to learn from overseas judo experts who have fully understood the philosophy of the sport.

There has been a certain amount of arrogance in Japan in thinking that because judo was invented there, then everyone else should follow Japan's example. That kind of thinking needs changing if we are to develop judo in the future.

What then is the essence of judo?

Professor Kano expressed it by saying "make good use of your strength" and "look to the mutual benefit of yourself and of others." This means that we should make the best use of our own energy to do the right thing, to respect others, and to build a better society for oneself and for others. The essence of the spirit of judo is contained here.

At the Genova Summit in 2001, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy gave each leader a present of a book entitled *Judo: History, Theory, Practice*. One of the three contributing writers of this original Russian work was President Putin. The message accompanying the book from the Prime Minister read, "The spirit advocated by Master Jigoro Kano, that recommends making good use of energy and looking to the mutual prosperity of oneself and others, is the spirit that is expected of the leaders that are gathered at the summit."

I wonder if we can even go so far as to say that this spirit that originated in Japan has already crossed over from the judo world to influence other countries in a variety of spheres, and has achieved a common position for mankind?

If the progress of globalization produces a considerable gap between winners and losers, then the importance of this spirit that comes from judo will increase, won't it?

Yes, I think so. The logic of the strong is increasing in the world of the 21st century. The importance of the spirit of judo, which rises above the idea of winners and losers, could be huge.

Judo is one of the martial arts that inherits the ideas of bushido. I would like the people of the world to recognize what is of value from bushido. For example, teachings that recommend against bullying the weak, and against pride in being strong, as well as having sympathy toward the less fortunate.

It is important
not only to master the techniques
of judo, but to
TRANSLATE THE
LESSONS OF JUDO
into one's own life...

After the war, the Japanese were denied the bushido spirit and sadly lost the samurai spirit. However, there are many positive and valuable points in the bushido philosophy. It is an undeniable fact that the bushido spirit was gravely misused during the war, but it is a pity that this misuse meant that the good elements of the philosophy were also lost to latter-day Japanese.

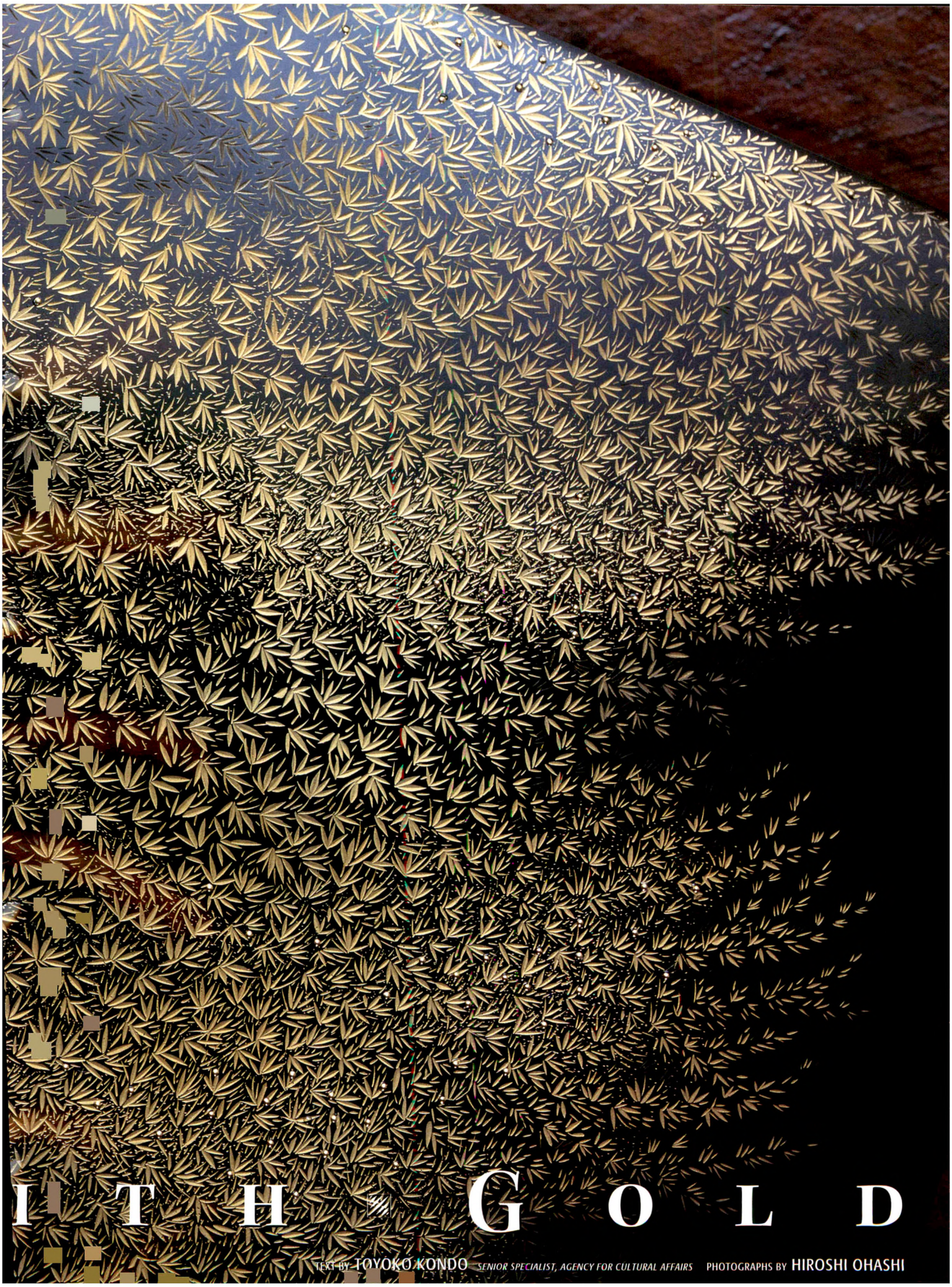
I felt this strongly when I saw the film *The Last Samurai*. Many overseas people I know who are involved with judo wept when watching this film. They said that the film was wonderful, and that it will help the people of the world to understand Japan. I wept because of the spirit that Japan had lost and the way that the bushido spirit was depicted.

This spirit remains in judo, despite having been lost in modern Japanese society. But it is possible to regain it. Japanese people are the descendants of the samurai, and I would like to introduce the beauty of the Japanese mind to the rest of the world through judo. ■

— INTERVIEW BY HISASHI KONDO

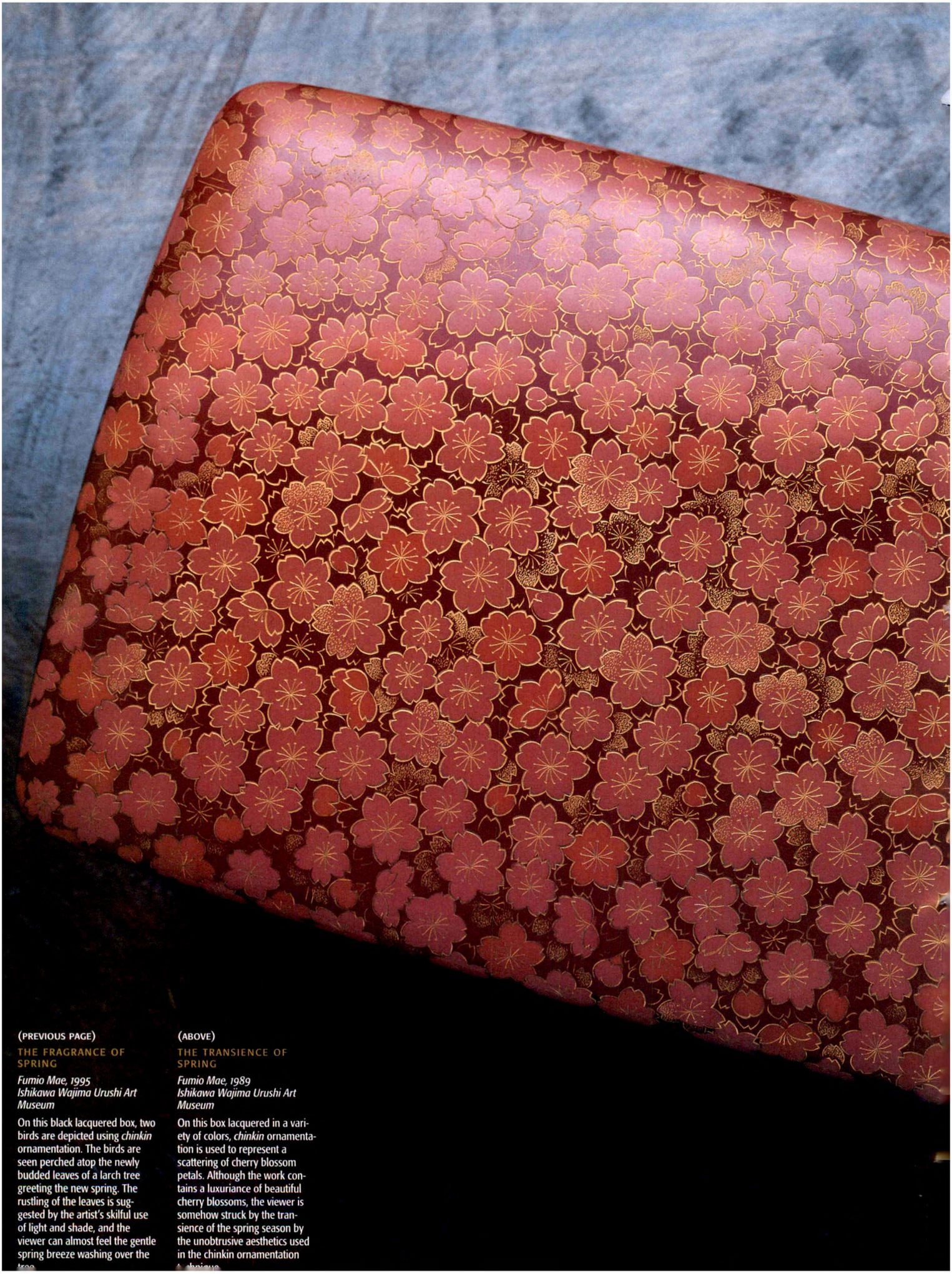
TRADITIONAL ART

INLAID



I T H G O L D

TEXT BY TOYOKO KONDO *SENIOR SPECIALIST, AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS* PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROSHI OHASHI



(PREVIOUS PAGE)

THE FRAGRANCE OF SPRING

Fumio Mae, 1995
Ishikawa Wajima Urushi Art Museum

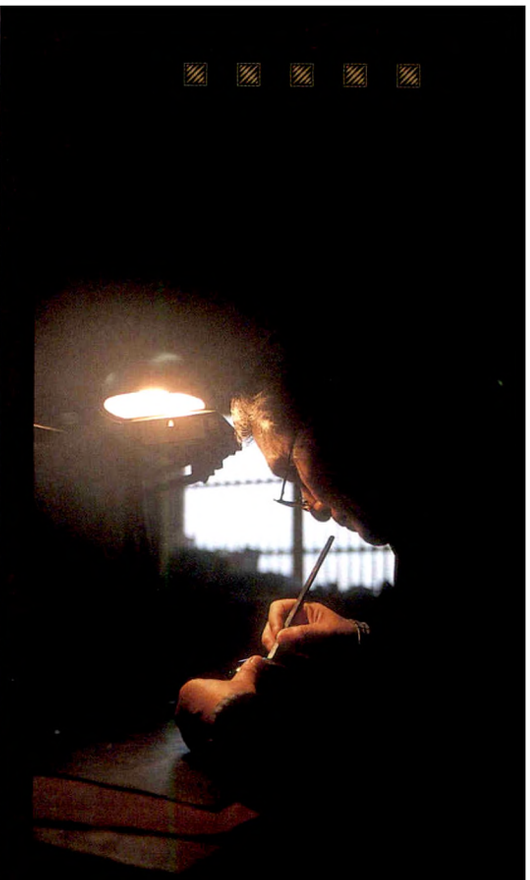
On this black lacquered box, two birds are depicted using *chinkin* ornamentation. The birds are seen perched atop the newly budded leaves of a larch tree greeting the new spring. The rustling of the leaves is suggested by the artist's skilful use of light and shade, and the viewer can almost feel the gentle spring breeze washing over the tree.

(ABOVE)

THE TRANSIENCE OF SPRING

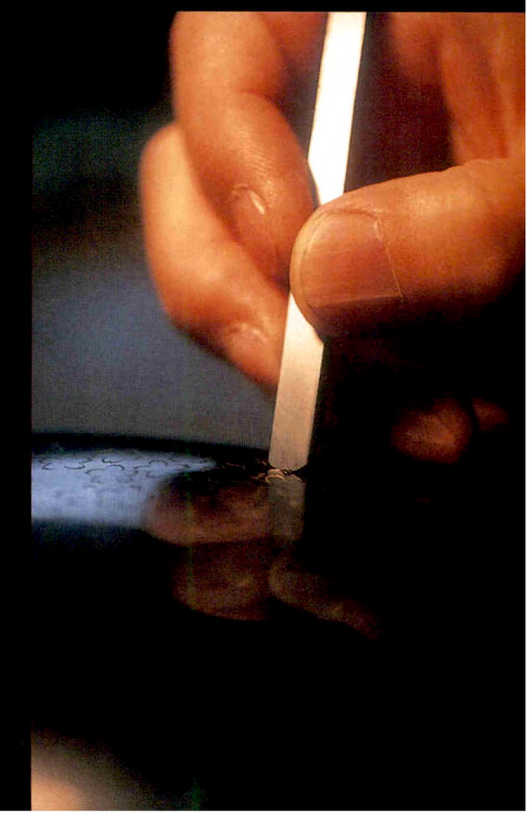
Fumio Mae, 1989
Ishikawa Wajima Urushi Art Museum

On this box lacquered in a variety of colors, *chinkin* ornamentation is used to represent a scattering of cherry blossom petals. Although the work contains a luxuriance of beautiful cherry blossoms, the viewer is somehow struck by the transience of the spring season by the unobtrusive aesthetics used in the chinkin ornamentation [illegible].



ABOVE: Fumio Mae, a designated Living National Treasure. Before he retired from teaching, he divided his time between instructing and creating new works of *chinkin* ornamented art.

BELOW: Delicate lines are drawn with specially designed chisels on a highly polished lacquer surface. Lacquer is again applied before the gold leaf is finally set into the fine lines.



A pattern is carefully etched into the smoothly polished lacquer surface. Next, another fine layer of lacquer is applied. Soft cloth or paper is used to wipe away excess lacquer, leaving behind only the lacquer in the recesses formed by the delicately traced lines of the carved pattern. Then, ultrafine gold powder or gold leaf is inlaid into the recesses. The gold is immediately smoothed away, and the carved pattern is left with its inlay of precious gold. This process of gold inlay lacquer ware ornamentation is known as *chinkin* (literally, sunken gold) ornamentation.

Chinkin was developed during the Sung dynasty (960–1279) in China, where it was known as *qiang jin*. There are nine examples of this early style of gold inlay—made in China during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) and exported to Japan—known to exist today. Each of the pieces is a decorative box for holding a copy of the Buddhist sutras. Four of the boxes are marked with black lacquer that dates the boxes to the year 1315, and from this information it is generally held that lacquer ware was being actively produced in southern China at this time. Chinkin ornamentation of lacquer ware was well underway in Japan as well by about the 16th century. By the latter part of the Edo period (1603–1867), chinkin had developed into a refined technique for which the Wajima lacquer ware made in what is now Wajima City, became well known. The chinkin ornamentation process was also widely used in lacquer ware produced in Okinawa under the Ryukyu Kingdom.

The chinkin process, in which linear patterns are incised on a lacquered wooden base, tended to produce flat, two-dimensional designs. However, lacquer ware artist Taiho Mae (1890–1977) successfully expanded the chinkin technique with his development of patterns that also use dots. By incorporating dots into the etched patterns, chinkin ornamentation could now be used to depict scenes with a sense of depth. Taiho's work won an award at a 1930 government-sponsored national public exhibition, and the artist went on to gain a favorable reputation throughout Japan. In fact, when the technique for the production of chinkin lacquer ware was designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property during just the second round of such designations in May 1955—following the first round in February the same year, Taiho Mae was recognized as the inaugural Holder of this Cultural Property.

Today, it is Fumio Mae who is the designated Holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property. Fumio is the grandson of Taiho's elder brother. As it turns out, Fumio is also Taiho's adopted son. It may seem unlikely, but Fumio did not begin his career as a Wajima lacquer ware artisan specializing in chinkin ornamentation. Nor did he get a particularly early start in the technique. Still, ever since he was a young boy, Fumio loved to work with his hands. When Fumio was fourteen and in his third year of junior high school, a young arts instructor just out of art school was captivated by a carving the boy had made. Encouraged by his young teacher, Fumio went on to study pottery at an industrial arts high school in Kanazawa City—now the Ishikawa Technical Senior High School. Then, in order to better polish his ceramics design skills, Fumio decided to go on to study Japanese painting at what is today the Kanazawa College of Art. When he graduated, his parents convinced him to return home to Wajima. There, Fumio began a teaching career as an arts instructor.

It was in the following year that an adoptive relationship was established between Taiho and Fumio. It was also at this time that Fumio first encountered lacquer ware and chinkin ornamentation. Fumio greatly enjoyed watching Taiho at work in his home studio. He gradually became interested in the chinkin technique, and tried his hand at the art by emulating the older artist. Fumio reflects that Taiho's guidance "was anything but strict. Rather, he made gentle suggestions on what to try and simply encouraged me. If anything, I had to struggle along on my own to figure out what worked." Of course, Taiho had observed Fumio since he was a boy. He may have chosen the hands-off approach to teaching because he knew better than anyone the natural skill Fumio possessed. Today, Fumio enjoys working surrounded by the soothing sounds of Mozart emanating from a high-quality stereo unit that includes a vacuum tube CD player he built himself.

Fumio Mae's work is distinguished by its painting-like designs. One example is his 1997 piece *Izayoi* (Moon Just Past Full). The lid of the black-lacquered box is decorated with a moonlit hagi bush clover plant, evocative of autumn in Japan. Lifting the lid reveals the hazy past-full moon on the inner sides of the box. One can almost hear the leaves of the hagi plant rustle in an early evening breeze. Fumio combined three separate types of carving to give depth to the light and shadows. Platinum and carbon powder give the work its elegant coolness of color. The opulence of the chinkin technique is perfectly balanced by the natural expressiveness of the incised pattern.

Various specialized chisels are used to carve the chinkin patterns, and Fumio often crafts his own tools to exactly match the design he has in mind. After all, the chisels are an extension of his hands. His piece entitled *Takamura* (Dense Bamboo) depicts sparrows in playful flight over a lush thicket of bamboo. Fumio used a chisel of his own design to delicately carve the bamboo leaves.

For 38 years Fumio pursued a teaching career in junior high and high schools and at the Ishikawa Prefectural Institute of Wajima Lacquer Arts. Of course, during that lengthy career as a teacher, evenings and weekends were the only times Fumio could work on his own lacquer ware. Many people urged him to leave teaching and concentrate on his artwork. But in the end, Fumio only retired from teaching when he reached the official retirement age of 60. He loved teaching, particularly being able to share with his students the joy and excitement that comes of making objects with one's own hands. In fact, some of the young people Fumio taught have gone on to become chinkin lacquer ware artists themseleves. Today, Fumio remains active creating high-quality pieces for the sake of future artists.

AUTUMN MOON

Fumio Mae, 2005

This work combines engraved lines with dot carving, and is very much a conventional piece of work. The traditional gold leaf has been replaced in this work with platinum leaf to express the somewhat dull glow of the moon gently bathing the bush clover.

DECORATIVE QIANG JIN SUTRA BOX WITH PEACOCKS

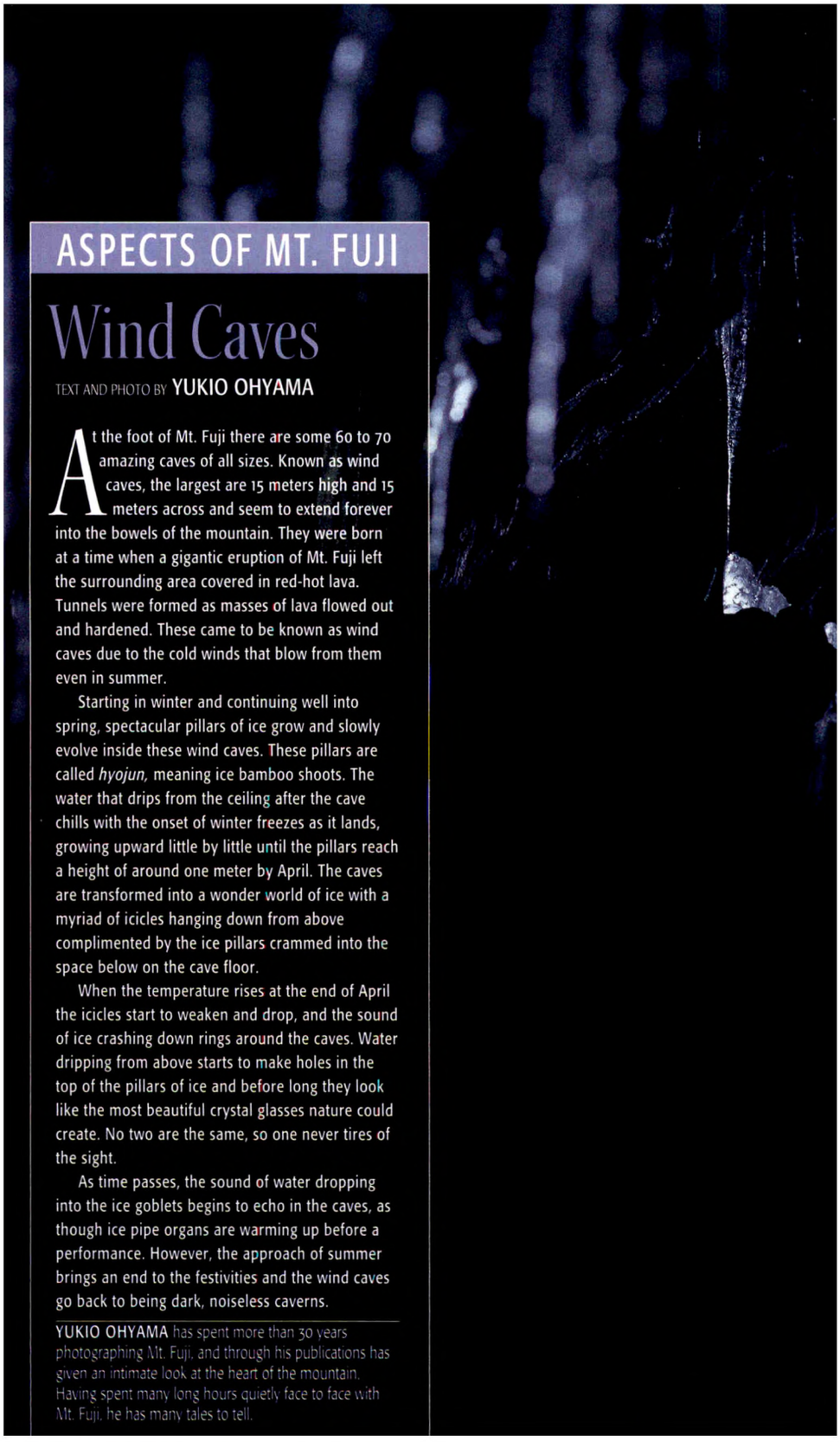
Yuan dynasty China, 1315 Tokyo National Museum

ORNAMENTAL BOX, CAT DESIGN IN CHINKIN

Taiho Mae, 1962 National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo

The glory of past empires can be glimpsed in the use of delicate *qiang jin* ornamentation on this sutra box. Two peacocks decorate each surface, and a floral pattern fills the surrounding ground. A black-lacquer indication on the reverse of the lid informs the reader that "a craftsman named Kin working under the master Zensho produced this piece in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, in the second year of the Yanyou reign in the Yuan dynasty." This box is one of nine such pieces in Japan, four of which date from the same year. It can be surmised that rather a large number of sutra boxes decorated in the qiang jin style were imported from China by tem-

Perhaps startled by a sound, a cat depicted using *chinkin* ornamentation pauses to listen. The plain black-lacquer ground works well to expose the cat in a moment of tension. Linear engraving was used to craft the cat's whiskers and eyelashes, but dot carving was used for the rest of the image. Masterful variation in dot size and grouping was employed to create a very realistic portrayal of the soft texture of the cat's fur. Artist Taiho Mae loved cats and often used them as a motif in his work. Even for Taiho, the innovator of the dot carving approach, this piece was a first attempt at depicting a cat using almost nothing but dot carving. He made the most of



ASPECTS OF MT. FUJI

Wind Caves

TEXT AND PHOTO BY **YUKIO OHYAMA**

At the foot of Mt. Fuji there are some 60 to 70 amazing caves of all sizes. Known as wind caves, the largest are 15 meters high and 15 meters across and seem to extend forever into the bowels of the mountain. They were born at a time when a gigantic eruption of Mt. Fuji left the surrounding area covered in red-hot lava. Tunnels were formed as masses of lava flowed out and hardened. These came to be known as wind caves due to the cold winds that blow from them even in summer.

Starting in winter and continuing well into spring, spectacular pillars of ice grow and slowly evolve inside these wind caves. These pillars are called *hyojun,* meaning ice bamboo shoots. The water that drips from the ceiling after the cave chills with the onset of winter freezes as it lands, growing upward little by little until the pillars reach a height of around one meter by April. The caves are transformed into a wonder world of ice with a myriad of icicles hanging down from above complimented by the ice pillars crammed into the space below on the cave floor.

When the temperature rises at the end of April the icicles start to weaken and drop, and the sound of ice crashing down rings around the caves. Water dripping from above starts to make holes in the top of the pillars of ice and before long they look like the most beautiful crystal glasses nature could create. No two are the same, so one never tires of the sight.

As time passes, the sound of water dropping into the ice goblets begins to echo in the caves, as though ice pipe organs are warming up before a performance. However, the approach of summer brings an end to the festivities and the wind caves go back to being dark, noiseless caverns.

YUKIO OHYAMA has spent more than 30 years photographing Mt. Fuji, and through his publications has given an intimate look at the heart of the mountain. Having spent many long hours quietly face to face with Mt. Fuji, he has many tales to tell.

LETTERS

Postwar Progress

I have read through various issues of the magazine *Asia-Pacific Perspectives: Japan+*, but the special feature "60 Years of Postwar Progress, 1945-2005" of your December 2005 edition has compelled me to write an opinion on this particular issue. I am a PhD scholar and the Japanese Studies Division (Center for East Asian Studies) at Jawaharlal Nehru University where I am currently studying regularly receives your publication. The special feature to which I refer above was an extremely well written piece on the progress of Japan in a variety of fields since the conclusion of the Second World War. The feature did not focus solely on the sphere of Japan's remarkable postwar economic growth, but did much to point out the contributions made by Japan in the field of international relations with the highly informative articles "60 Years of Japanese Diplomacy" and "Diplomacy in Asia."

The comparative photographs that were used to contrast immediate postwar Japan with contemporary Japan were fabulous, making the distinction plain for all to see. I was amazed to learn how much the Japanese lifestyle has changed over the course of just a few decades. Also, I found the article entitled "Postwar Environmental Issues" particularly interesting as it highlighted some of the serious pollution and other environmental problems that Japan had to overcome during the 1960s and 1970s – the period of its rapid industrialization and economic growth. Surely this article can serve as a very useful frame of reference for other countries that are currently undergoing such periods of high economic growth themselves.

Lastly, I would like to add that *Asia-Pacific Perspectives: Japan+* is a magnificent magazine, and is one of my main sources of information on Japan and the Asia-Pacific region as I endeavor to complete my studies. Thank you very much to all your staff for their continuously sterling efforts. Please, keep up the good work!

Mahendra Prakash
New Delhi, India

Readers are invited to send in their opinions on any topics raised in any issue of *APP: Japan+*, or indeed on any topic relevant to Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. Letters are welcome either by e-mail **(j-plus@jijigaho.or.jp)** or by post **(*APP: Japan+*, Jiji Gaho Sha, Fonte Akasaka Building, Akasaka 7-10-17, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052, Japan.)**

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www.jijigaho.or.jp/index_e.html

Electronic Pets

In recent years, it has become very popular to nurture electronic pets on related Internet sites and through video games. By far the most popular of all these types of electronic pets, however, has been the *tamagotchi* pet released by BANDAI Co., Ltd. It is not at all unusual to see teenage girls walking along the streets of Japan concentrating intensely on playing a tamagotchi game on their mobile devices.

The first version of tamagotchi was released back in 1996, while the second version came out in 2004, and both versions have proved extremely popular. By September 2005, the second version had sold a total of 14 million units worldwide. The game recreates the fun to be had in looking after your pet in a variety of ways; from feeding and toilet training through to helping with the birth of its young. The latest version was released in November 2005 and contains a range of new features more associated with one's own children rather than pets. These include helping to make such important life choices as education and finding suitable employment. The new improved infrastructure now allows for a communication network between fellow tamagotchi or between tamagotchi and mobile phones using infrared rays. Tamagotchi just seems to keep on increasing in popularity with shops quickly running out of stock, and this lovable 'pet' is now a huge hit in 44 countries and regions around the globe.

PHOTO: TAKAHIRO SAKUMA • GOODS: ©BANDAI•WIZ 2004

TOKYO BIG SIGHT EVENT SCHEDULE MARCH 2006—MAY 2006

3/1 (Wed) – 3/3 (Fri) *Trade ¥3000*
2006 Super-Market·Trade Show
Management Office
Tel: 03-5209-1056 Fax: 03-3255-4829

3/1 (Wed) – 3/3 (Fri) *Trade ¥3000*
Super Showcase
Management Office
Tel: 03-3262-8456 Fax: 03-3262-8442

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
JAPAN SHOP 2006
NIHON KEIZAI SHINBUN, INC. CULTURAL AND BUSINESS PROJECTS BUREAU
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
ARCHITECTURE + CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS 2006
Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc.
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
RETAILTECH JAPAN 2006
Show Organizer
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
IC CARD WORLD 2006
Nihon Keizai Simbun, Inc.
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/7 (Tue) – 3/10 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
SECURITY SHOW 2006
Secretariat of SECURITY SHOW
Tel: 03-5255-2847 Fax: 03-5255-2860

3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
HOTERES JAPAN 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
Tel: 03-3434-1377 Fax: 03-3434-8076

3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
CATEREX JAPAN 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
Tel: 03-3434-1377 Fax: 03-3434-8076

3/14 (Tue) – 3/17 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
JAPAN FOOD SERVICE EQUIPMENT SHOW 2006
The Secretariat of HCJ
Tel: 03-3434-1377 Fax: 03-3434-8076

3/19 (Sun) *Public*
HARU COMIC CITY 11
Akaboo
Tel: 03-3225-8520

3/22 (Wed) – 3/24 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
Tokyo Health Industry Show 2006
CMP JAPAN Co., Ltd.
Tel: 03-5296-1017 Fax: 03-5296-1018

3/23 (Thu) – 3/26 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
Photo Imaging EXPO 2006
JAPAN COLOR-PHOTO FINISHERS' ASSOCIATION
Tel: 03-3288-0337 Fax: 03-3288-0338

3/23 (Thu) – 3/26 (Sun) *Trade/Public*
Tokyo International Anime Fair 2006
Tokyo International Anime Fair Executive Committee
Tel: 03-5320-4786 Fax: 03-5388-1463

3/31 (Fri) – 4/2 (Sun) *Public ¥1500*
The 33rd Tokyo Motorcycle Show 2006
Tokyo Motorcycle Show Operation Secretariat
Tel: 03-5847-7045 Fax: 03-5847-7046

4/1 (Sat) – 4/2 (Sun) *Public ¥500*
2006 FCI ASIAN INTERNATIONAL DOG SHOW
JAPAN KENNEL CLUB, INC.
Tel: 03-3251-1652 Fax: 03-3251-1659

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
Sea Japan 2006
Sea Japan Secretariat office
Tel: 03-5296-1020 Fax: 03-5296-1018

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
Sensor Expo Japan 2006
Fuji Sankei Business-i. Promotion Division
Tel: 03-3273-6184 Fax: 03-3241-4999

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
International Measurement, Test and Control Technology Show 2006
JAPAN MEASURING INSTRUMENTS FEDERATION
Tel: 03-3268-2121 Fax: 03-3268-2167

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
The 1st International Homefashion Fair
IHF Office
Tel: 03-3847-9853 Fax: 03-3843-9850

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
33rd INTERNATIONAL PREMIUM INCENTIVE SHOW
Business Guide-sha Inc.
Tel: 03-3847-9155 Fax: 03-3847-9436

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
22nd FORMAL GIFT FAIR SPRING 2006
Business Guide-sha Inc.
Tel: 03-3847-9155 Fax: 03-3847-9436

4/6 (Thu) – 4/8 (Sat) *Public ¥1000*
THE 4th PAINT SHOW 2006
The Paint Show 2006 Executive Committee
Tel: 03-6821-5115 Fax: 03-3780-0885

4/12 (Wed) – 4/15 (Sat) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
The Japan International Welding Show 2006
Sanpo Publications, Inc.
Tel: 03-3258-6411 Fax: 03-3258-6430

4/19 (Wed) – 4/21 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
16th FINETECH JAPAN (FPD R&D AND MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY EXPO & CONFERENCE)
FINETECH JAPAN Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

4/19 (Wed) – 4/21 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
2nd International FPD Expo
Display 2006 Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

4/24 (Mon) – 4/26 (Wed) *Trade ¥3000*
CPhI JAPAN 2006
CMP Japan Co., Ltd.
Tel: 03-5296-1020 Fax: 03-5296-1018

4/24 (Mon) – 4/26 (Wed) *Trade ¥3000*
ICSE JAPAN 2006
CMP Japan Co., Ltd.
Tel: 03-5296-1020 Fax: 03-5296-1018

4/28 (Fri) – 4/30 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥2000*
Tokyo Special Import-Car Show 2006
Tokyo Special Import-Car Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3360-1821 Fax: 03-3360-1829

4/28 (Fri) – 4/30 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥2000*
GARAGE & HOUSING EXPO 2006
GARAGE & HOUSING EXPO Management Office
Tel: 03-3360-1821 Fax: 03-3360-1829

5/3 (Wed) *Public ¥1000*
AMUSING COLLECTION FLEA MARKET & COS-DAY/Comic Characters
TAKARAJIMA Collection Market Office
Tel: 03-3843-1290 Fax: 03-3843-2400

5/3 (Wed) – 5/4 (Thu) *Public ¥1000*
SUPER COMIC CITY 15
Akaboo
Tel: 03-3225-8520

5/5 (Fri) *Public ¥1500*
Dolls Party 15
VOLKS
Tel: 075-813-1171 Fax: 075-813-1133

5/8 (Mon) – 5/10 (Wed) *Trade*
Beautyworld Japan
Beautyworld Japan Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3262-8456 Fax: 03-3262-8442

5/11 (Thu) – 5/13 (Sat) *Public ¥1000*
30th 2006 JAPAN HOBBY SHOW
JAPAN HOBBY ASSOCIATION
Tel: 03-3851-6628 Fax: 03-3864-8535

5/17 (Wed) – 5/19 (Fri) *Trade/Public Free*
BUSINESS SHOW TOKYO IT&C/Advanced Office Fair 2006
Business Show Group Nippon Omni-Management Association
Tel: 03-3403-8910 Fax: 03-3403-5716

5/17 (Wed) – 5/19 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
19th INTERPHEX JAPAN
INTERPHEX JAPAN Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8509 Fax: 03-3349-4922

5/17 (Wed) – 5/19 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
5th INTERNATIONAL BIO EXPO JAPAN
INTERNATIONAL BIO EXPO JAPAN Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8509 Fax: 03-3349-4922

5/20 (Sat) – 5/21 (Sun) *Public ¥1000*
DESIGN·FESTA VOL.23
DESIGN·FESTA OFFICE
Tel: 03-3479-1433 Fax: 03-3479-1498

5/23 (Tue) – 5/26 (Fri) *Public ¥1000*
N-EXPO
Nippo Event
Tel: 03-3262-3562 Fax: 03-5214-6633

5/24 (Wed) – 5/26 (Fri) *Trade*
ANEX2006 (ASIA NONWOVENS EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE)
E.J. Krause & Associates, Inc. JAPAN
Tel: 03-5212-7071 Fax: 03-5212-6091

5/24 (Wed) – 5/26 (Fri) *Public Free*
ECO-GREEN TECH 2006
The Executive Committee of Eco-Green Tech
Tel: 03-3267-4886 Fax: 03-3267-4842

5/30 (Tue) – 6/1 (Thu) *Trade ¥3000*
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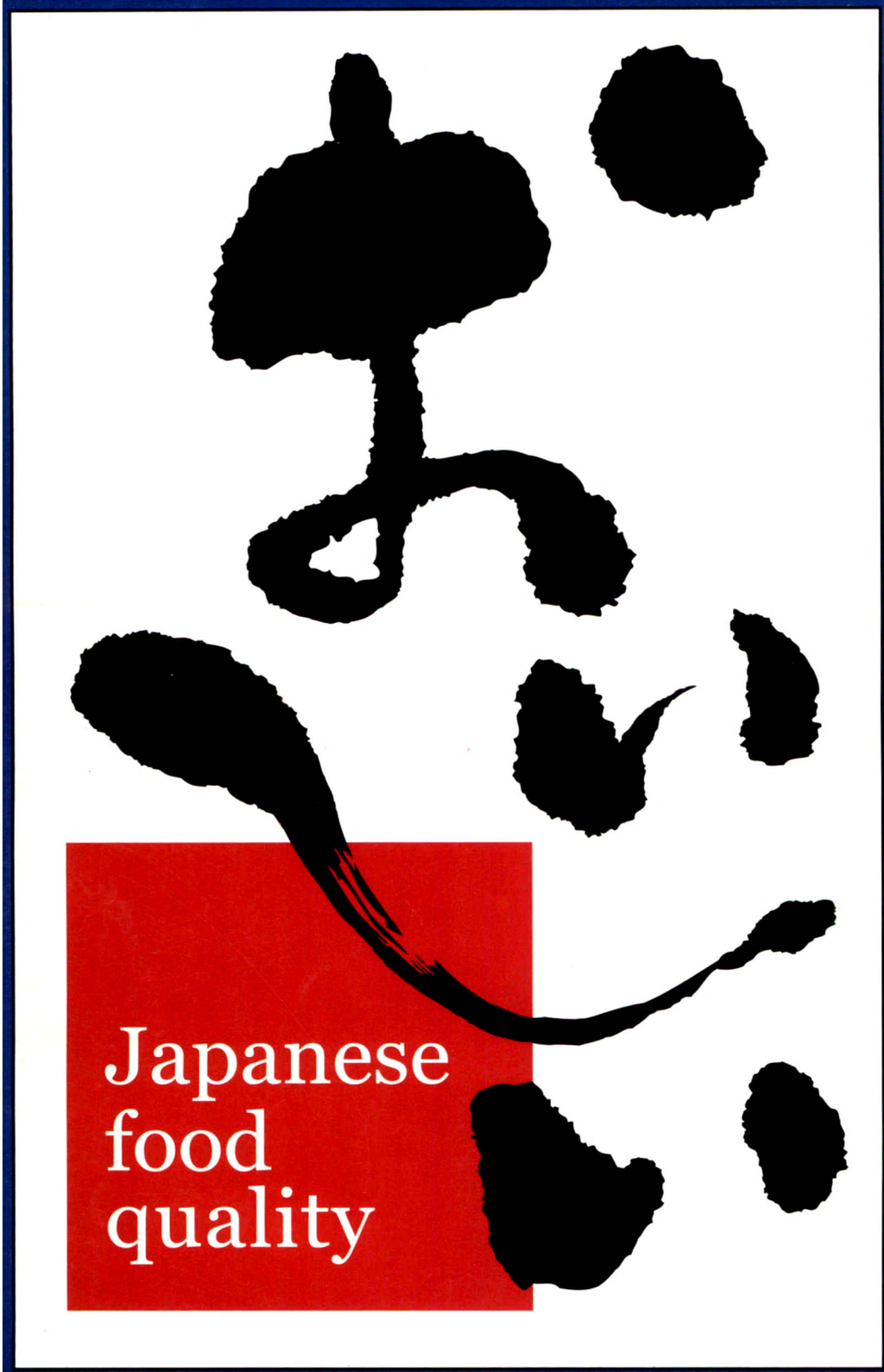

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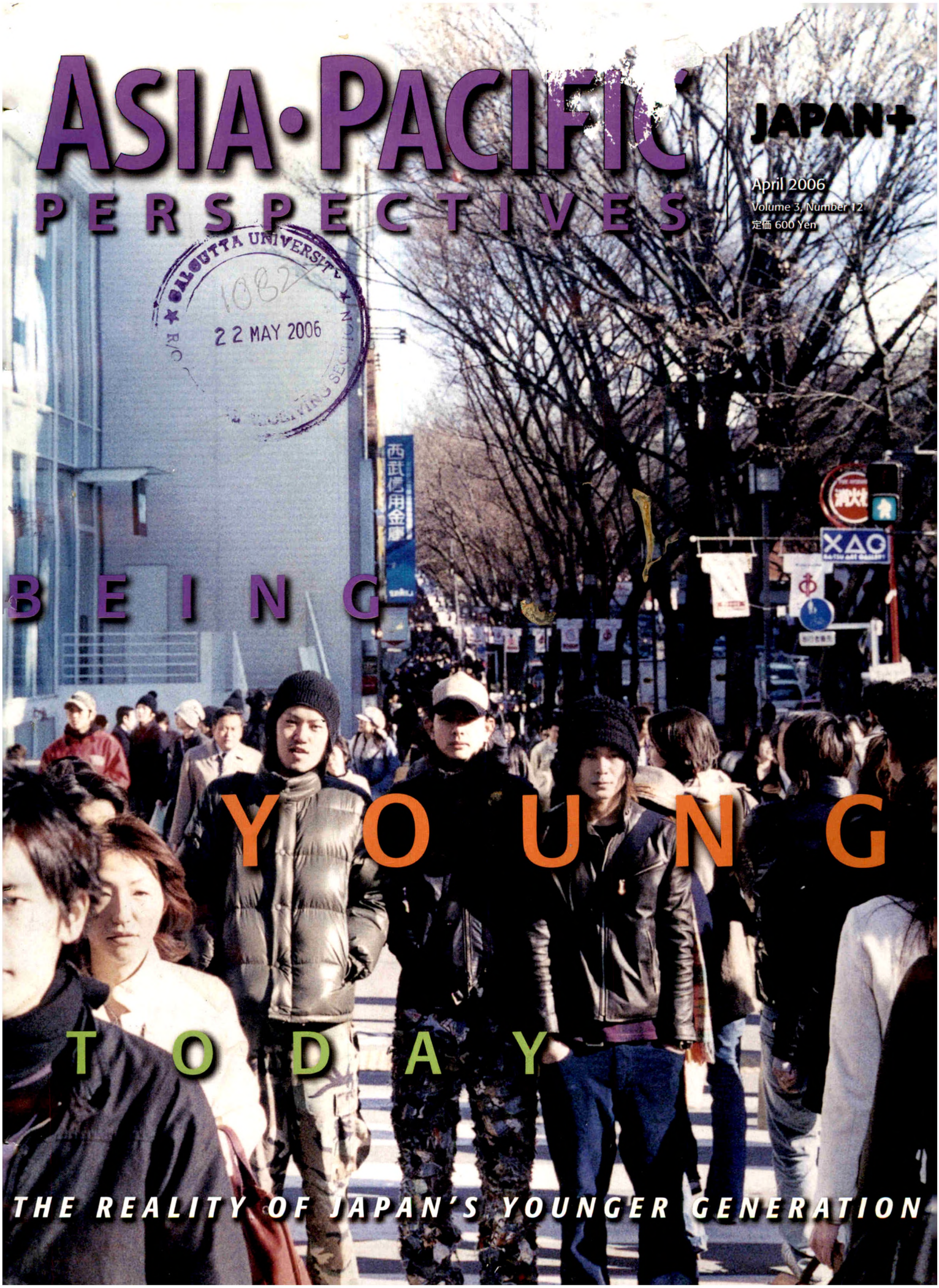
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THE MEN BEHIND THE

Festival

In May each year, Tokyo comes alive with the Sanja-matsuri festival —and this year is no exception. Those behind the success of this festival all hail from Taito Ward's Asakusa area, and ensure every aspect of the festival runs smoothly. Jinichi Sugibayashi *(photo center)* heads a team of helpers who are kept busy throughout the duration of the festival. These are the men, ably assisted by local townsfolk, who keep the Edo period traditions alive. Drop by Taito sometime, and savor the flavor of the Japan of yesteryear.

ACCESS Ueno Station, the gateway to Taito, is 60 minutes from Narita Airport by express on the Keisei Line. • Asakusa is five minutes from Ueno on the subway Ginza Line.

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SKATING TO VICTORY

A near-perfect performance from Shizuka Arakawa saw her claim Asia's first ever Olympic gold in figure skating.

Japan's Shizuka Arakawa won the gold medal in the women's figure skating at the Turin Winter Olympics. Not only was this the first medal won by the Japanese team in Turin, it is also Japan's first ever Olympic gold in figure skating. Moreover, Arakawa became the first Asian figure skating Olympic champion in history.

On February 21 Arakawa advanced to third place in the short program. At this stage, Sasha Cohen of the United States was in first place closely followed by Irina Slutskaya of Russia in second and Arakawa—and only the slightest of margins separated the three.

Arakawa was the twenty-first competitor onto the rink two days later in the free program on February 23. Wearing a blue and purple costume and skating to Puccini's opera "Turandot," Arakawa completed a triple and double jump combination in the opening section. In the second half of her performance, after an Ina Bauer movement in which she elegantly arched over backwards with her legs approximating a spread eagle position, Arakawa completed another jump combination before receiving a standing ovation from the spectators. The applause for her almost perfect performance seemed to go on forever.

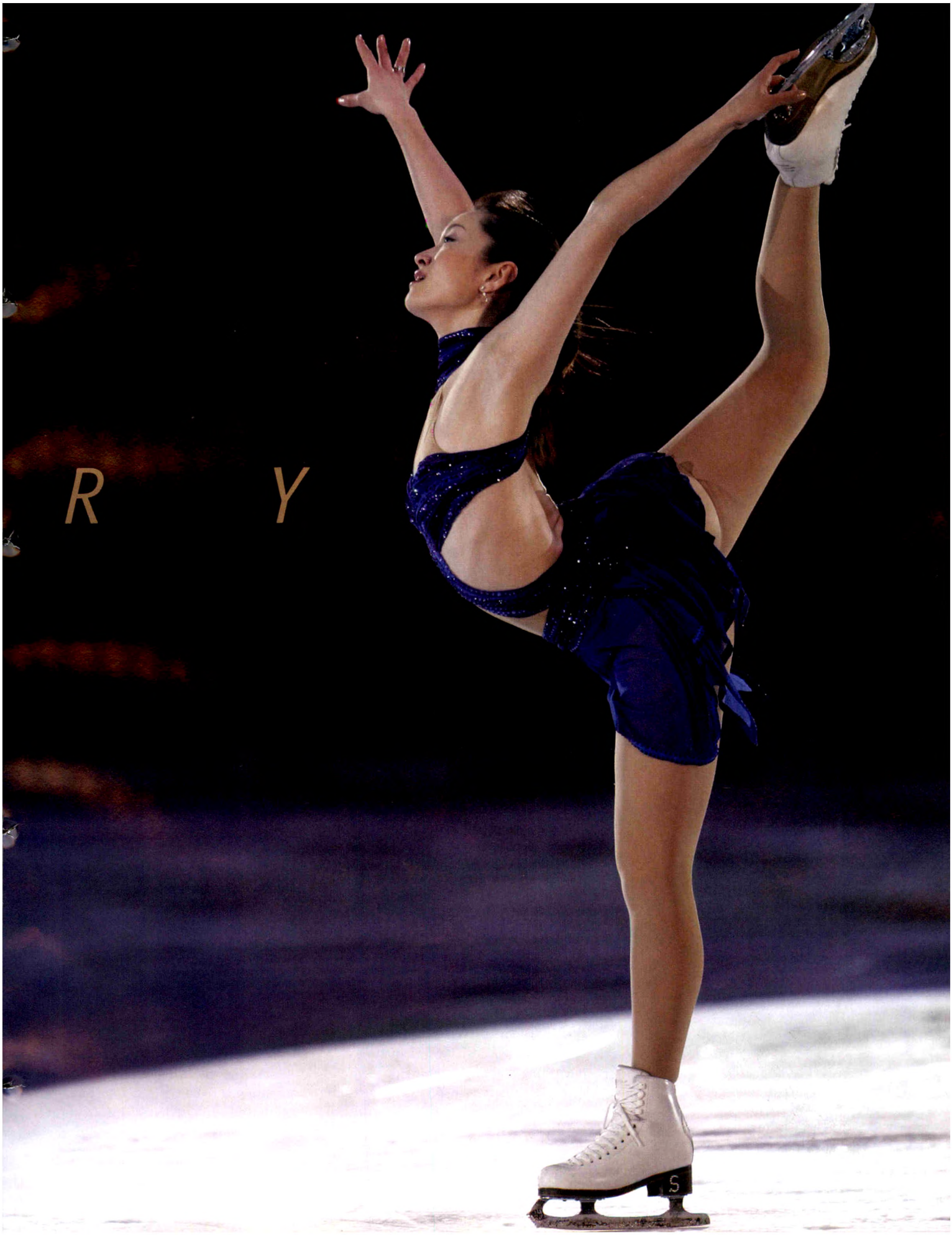
But Arakawa's path to Olympic success was by no means easy. She started figure skating while still at elementary school and soon came to be rated as a child prodigy. She appeared in the 1998 Nagano Olympics at the age of 16, finishing a creditable thirteenth. After missing out on the Salt Lake City Olympics in 2002, she bounced back superbly two years later to become the World Champion in 2004. "Turandot" was the melody she used on that occasion. Arakawa had actually been considering retiring from figure skating, but her World Championship victory left her in two minds as to whether or not she should try for the Turin Olympics. The following year, in 2005, she finished a lowly ninth in the World Championship, then eighth in the Grand Prix series used to select the Japanese Olympic team. Arakawa was in a bind. Other skaters had rapidly improved and as the competition for the three Olympic spots heated up Arakawa decided to change her coach just before the All Japan Championships in which the final selection would be made. A more relaxed performance earned third place and a spot in the Olympic team. But that wasn't the end of her troubles: even this year her preparation was hardly ideal. In addition to hurting her right heel after changing to skates that did not fit properly, she injured her left shoulder during practice after arriving in Turin. In January, she also changed her musical accompaniment for both the short and free programs.

However, Arakawa conquered all of this to win the Olympic gold. In the world of figure skating, which reflects such western values as power of expression, Arakawa was always going to be at a disadvantage. Yet she was eventually able to overcome all obstacles that stood in her way to clinch a stunning victory.

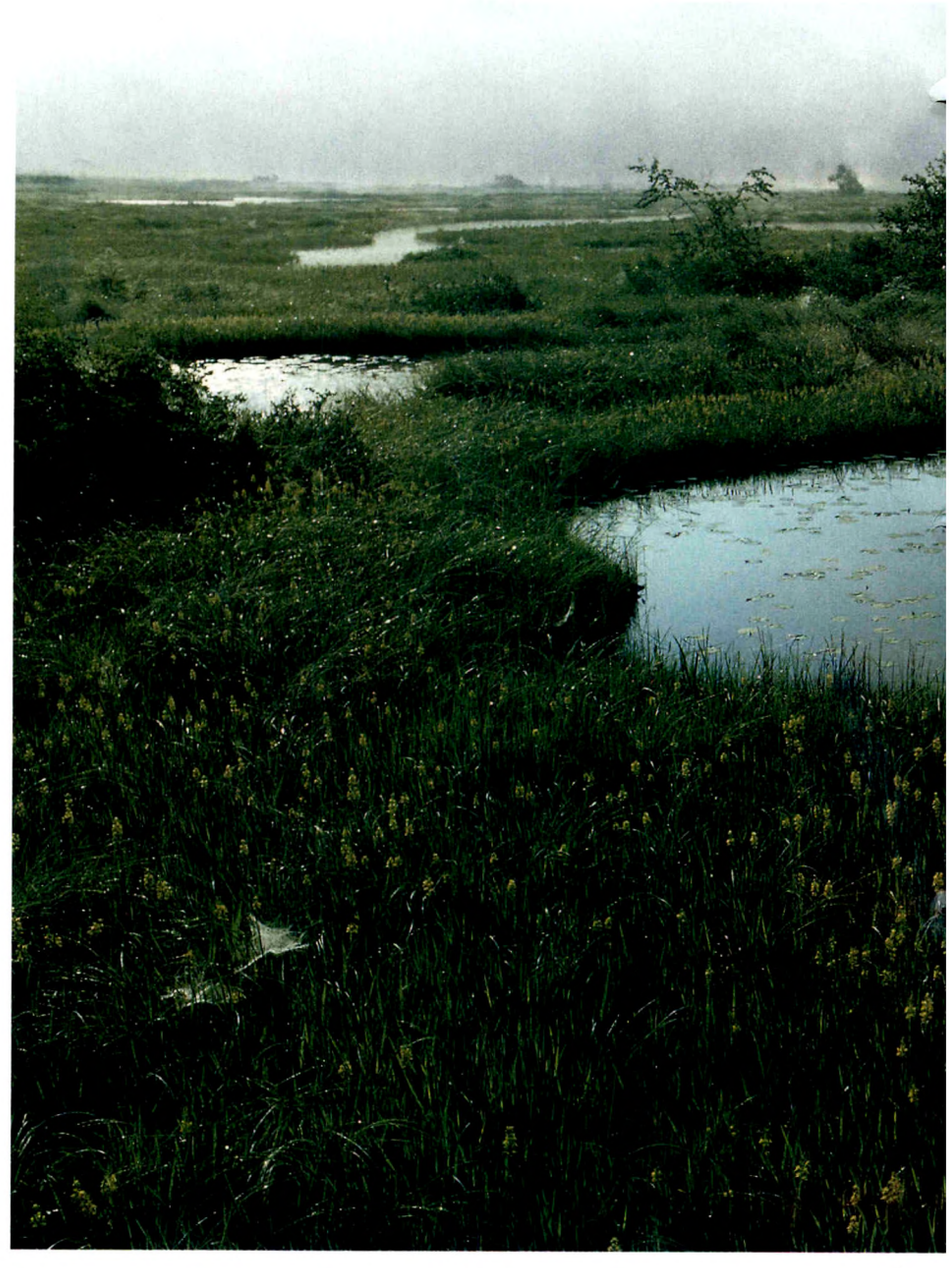
– YUKA OGURA

Olympic gold medallist Shizuka Arakawa at the post-medal award figure skating exhibition.

PHOTO KISHIMOTO



CONSERVING Japan's Wetlands

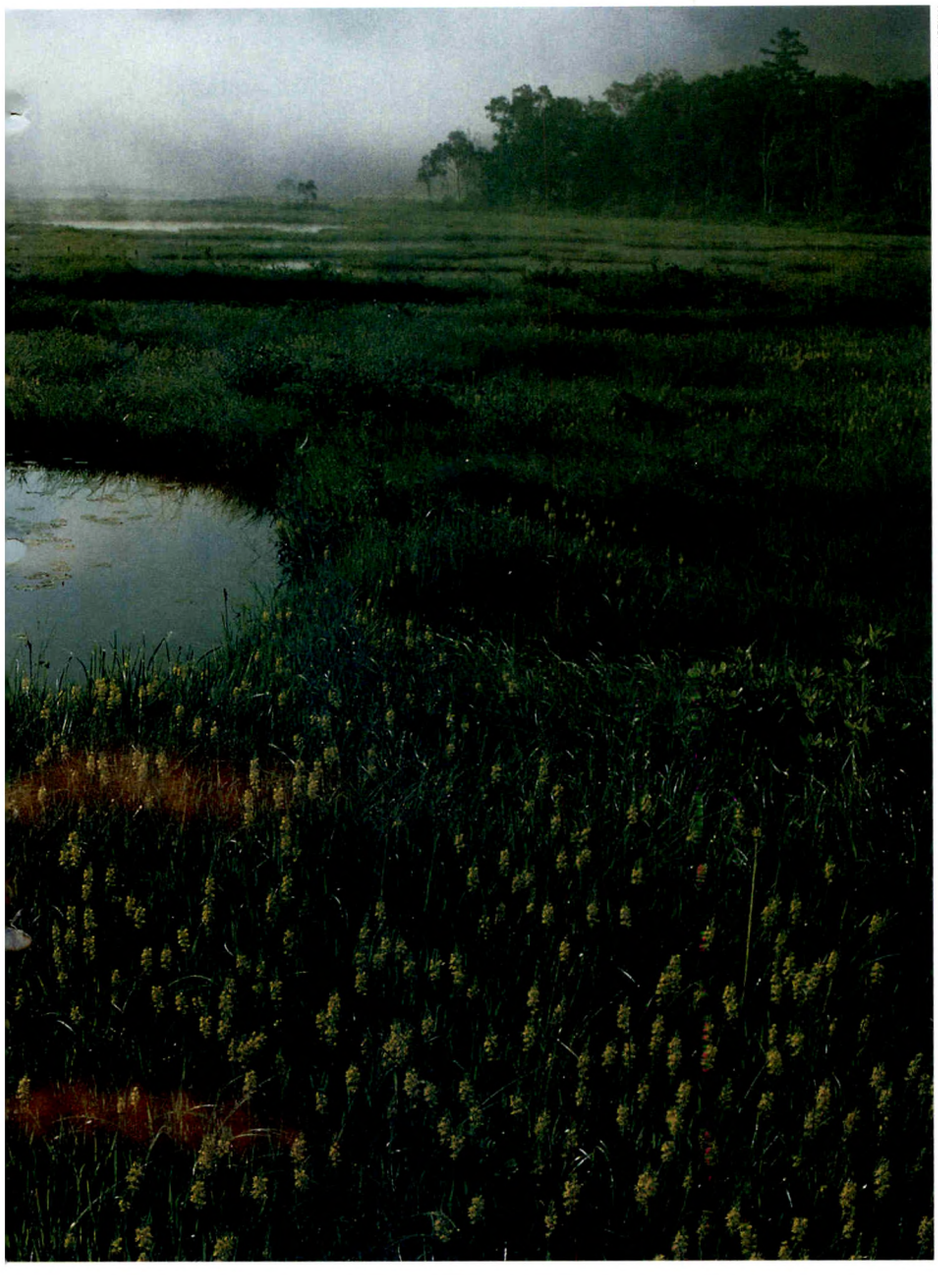


In November 2005 twenty wetland areas throughout Japan were newly designated under the Ramsar Convention at the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. We take a look at Japan's fascinating wetlands, home to a rich diversity of life.

Biodiversity" is a biological term that refers to the number and variety of living organisms coexisting in an ecosystem. In short, it's an all-inclusive word to express the abundance of life. In the natural environment, wetlands are particularly rich in biodiversity, and the Ramsar Convention is the international framework currently in place for conserving such areas.

Officially titled the "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat," the Ramsar Convention was established in 1971 as a pioneering multilateral treaty on environmental protection. It takes its common name from the city of Ramsar on the Caspian Sea coast of Iran, where the treaty was signed. As of January 2006, 150 countries had acceded to the convention, under which 1,578 wetlands have been designated covering a total area of approximately 133.9 million hectares. Japan joined the convention in 1980, when it designated Kushiro-Shitsugen marsh in Hokkaido, the largest wetland in the country.

"Because the official title especially mentions waterfowl, the Ramsar Convention is sometimes misunderstood as aiming only to protect aquatic birds," points out Noriko Moriwake of the Ministry of the Environment's Nature Conservation Bureau, a focal point of Japan for the convention. "However the real purpose of the convention is to conserve not only waterfowl, but all things that live near water and their habitats, and to pass on to the next generation these precious ecosystems



TAKESHI MIZUKOSHI

Left: Bog asphodel flowers *(narthecium asiaticum Maxim)* adorn the Ozegahara wetlands in early summer. This wetland was designated by the Ramsar Convention in November 2005.

Below: The beautiful coral in the waters of the Kerama-shoto islands. This area was also designated by the Ramsar Convention in November 2005.

KENSUKE YOKOI

teeming with biodiversity."

At the 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands held in November 2005 in Kampala, capital of the central African state of Uganda, 20 further Japanese wetlands were designated. This represented a substantial addition to the 13 wetlands in Japan already listed, and the 33 wetlands now designated cover a total area of approximately 130,000 hectares. A key feature of the new listings is that they are not limited solely to marshes and tidal flats, the types of wetlands that were designated previously.

The Ramsar Convention includes coastal coral reefs, beaches and groundwater systems in its definition of wetlands. The latest Japanese sites designated include the waters surrounding the Kerama-shoto islands in Okinawa Prefecture, an area of well-preserved coral reefs that form an ecosystem supporting a wealth of species to rival any tropical rainforest; Nagata-hama beach on Yakushima Island in Kagoshima Prefecture, a large spawning ground for the loggerhead turtle; and the Akiyoshidai groundwater system in Yamaguchi Prefecture, renowned as home to an abundance of bats and other cave-dwelling organisms. "These new listings conform to the original spirit of the convention, which is to conserve precious wetland ecosystems," notes Moriwake.

What is the key to promoting the conservation of wetlands, which are essential to preserving biodiversity? "While protecting wetlands through conservation activities, we also need to make nearby human activity compatible with such efforts and ensure the wise use of wetlands," says Reiko Nakamura, Secretary-General of Ramsar Center Japan (RCJ), an NGO working for the protection of wetlands.

To provide a forum to study and discuss such wise use, RCJ has for many years held international meetings such as the Asian Wetland Symposium, helping build a network linking the many wetland researchers and NGOs dotted around Asia. In recognition of her achievements, last November Nakamura became the first Japanese to receive the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award, a prize for groups and individuals who have contributed to the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

– TADAHIRO OHKOSHI

The Impact of Kabuki

One of the best-known kabuki pieces is *Shibaraku* (Just a Moment). The facial makeup of leading actor, Danjuro Ichikawa XII, is mainly red to signify valor.

©SHOCHIKU

22 MAY 2006
CENTRAL RECEIVING SECTION

Kabuki was designated a world intangible cultural asset by UNESCO in November 2005. We look at the cultural impact it has had overseas.

Kabuki is far more than just another rather impenetrable Japanese art form. Its impact can be seen in a variety of genres, of which perhaps the most obvious is film. It is well known that the Russian film director Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein (1898–1948), one of the greatest directors of the first half of the 20th century whose works include *The Battleship Potemkin,* was greatly influenced by kabuki. His first encounter with kabuki was when he saw the legendary Ichikawa Ennosuke II perform with the troupe of Ichikawa Sadanji in Moscow in 1928, in the first ever overseas performance of kabuki. "When Ichikawa Ennosuke performs *hara-kiri*, or ritual suicide, the movements of his hands and the sounds offstage correspond graphically to each other. I know of no other way that could surpass the mastery with which auditory and sensory images are depicted in combination," he later wrote. "The emotion of the moment, in which the scene is displayed before us as a perfectly-formed montage, sends shivers down the spine. Just as impressionism clearly owes much to the style of Japanese prints, talking movies will also be greatly indebted to the Japanese."

1970s rockers Kiss are still wowing audiences today.

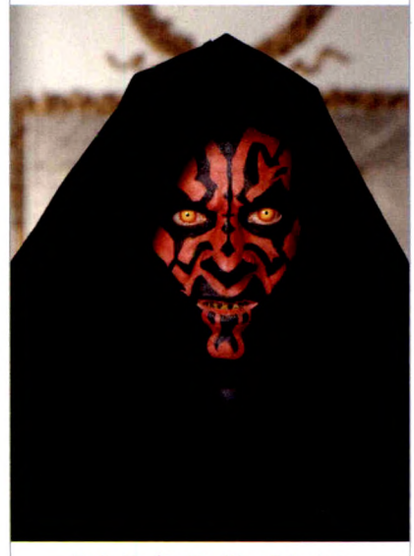
Russian director Sergei Eisenstein's film *Ivan the Terrible* makes use of the kabuki technique of *mie.*

Eisenstein was particularly influenced by the kabuki technique of *mie.* This is a pose that occurs at a climactic moment, when the actor or actors freeze their movements and hold a stylized posture with the eyes glaring wide open. The effect is much like a cinematic close-up or freeze frame, and Eisenstein uses this technique in his famous film *Ivan Groznyi* (Ivan the Terrible). This technique has not just been used in films, though; director Julie Taymor is said to have borrowed some ideas from mie in the way she made the animals move in her production of the musical *The Lion King,* which achieved tremendous popularity after it opened on Broadway in 1997.

An interesting feature of kabuki is that all the roles, including those of women, are played by men. It was not always so, however—kabuki traces its roots back to when Okuni, a female dancer, danced the "kabuki dance" dressed as a man in 1603, the first year of the Edo period (1603–1867). The name kabuki stems from the word *kabuku,* meaning "to tilt or incline," or else "to be unusual or eccentric." It described the *kabuki-mono*, the "wild ones," who flouted society with their outrageous dress and manners, and was used for Okuni's wild display of dancing. Over the following 400 years, kabuki was refined into a distinctive form of expression.

The French poet Jean Cocteau (1889–1963) visited Japan in 1936, where he saw the great kabuki actor Onoe Kikugoro VI perform in *Shunkyo Kagamijishi* (The Lion Dance). Cocteau was so astounded by what he saw that he called kabuki the "religion of the theater"—performances such as *Kagamijishi* were like religious rituals, with Onoe Kikugoro playing the role of the high priest. Cocteau was lavish in his praise; "Kikugoro's body, each individual step, the way he adopts set poses, all seem to have come down from some immeasurable heaven." Cocteau later confided to a friend that he got the idea for his 1945 cinematic masterpiece *Beauty and the Beast* from *Kagamijishi.*

Not only have the modes of expression from kabuki had an overseas impact, the visual imagery of kabuki has also been an influence in some unlikely places. It is very well known that the members of the 1970s rock band Kiss—which is still going strong—borrowed some ideas for their outlandish makeup and extreme stage performances from kabuki. Director George Lucas of *Star Wars* fame is known to be a Japanophile, and many fans speculate that the red and black tattooed face of bad guy Darth Maul in *Episode I: The Phantom Menace* was inspired by the characteristic *kumadori* facial makeup of kabuki, in which heavy shadows are drawn to exaggerate the frame and musculature of the face.



Darth Maul in *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace.*

Of course, many people enjoy kabuki just as it is. Every year, thousands of overseas visitors to Japan watch performances of kabuki, while many others enjoy the theatrical spectacle in major cities all round the world.

— MAYUMI NAKAMURA

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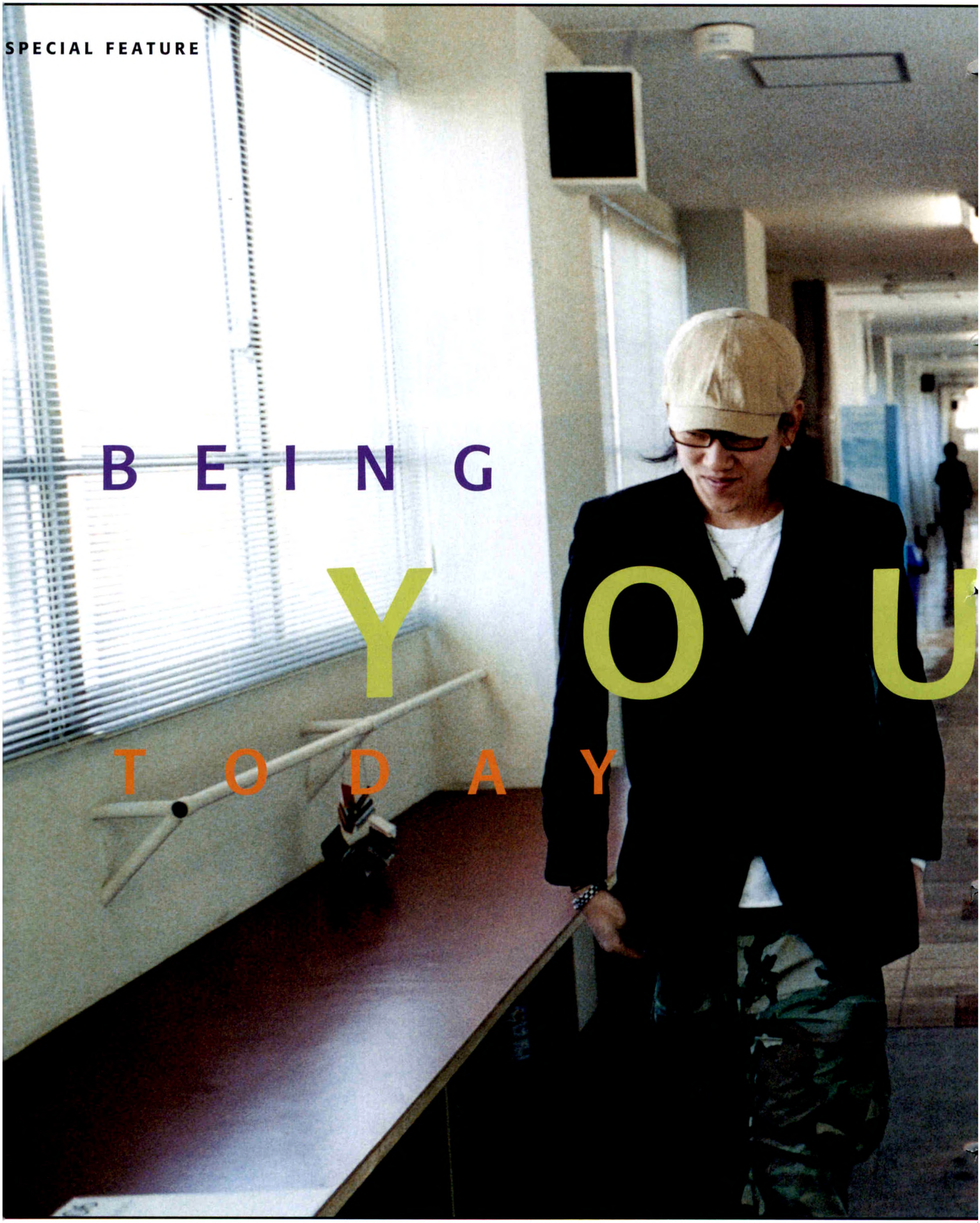

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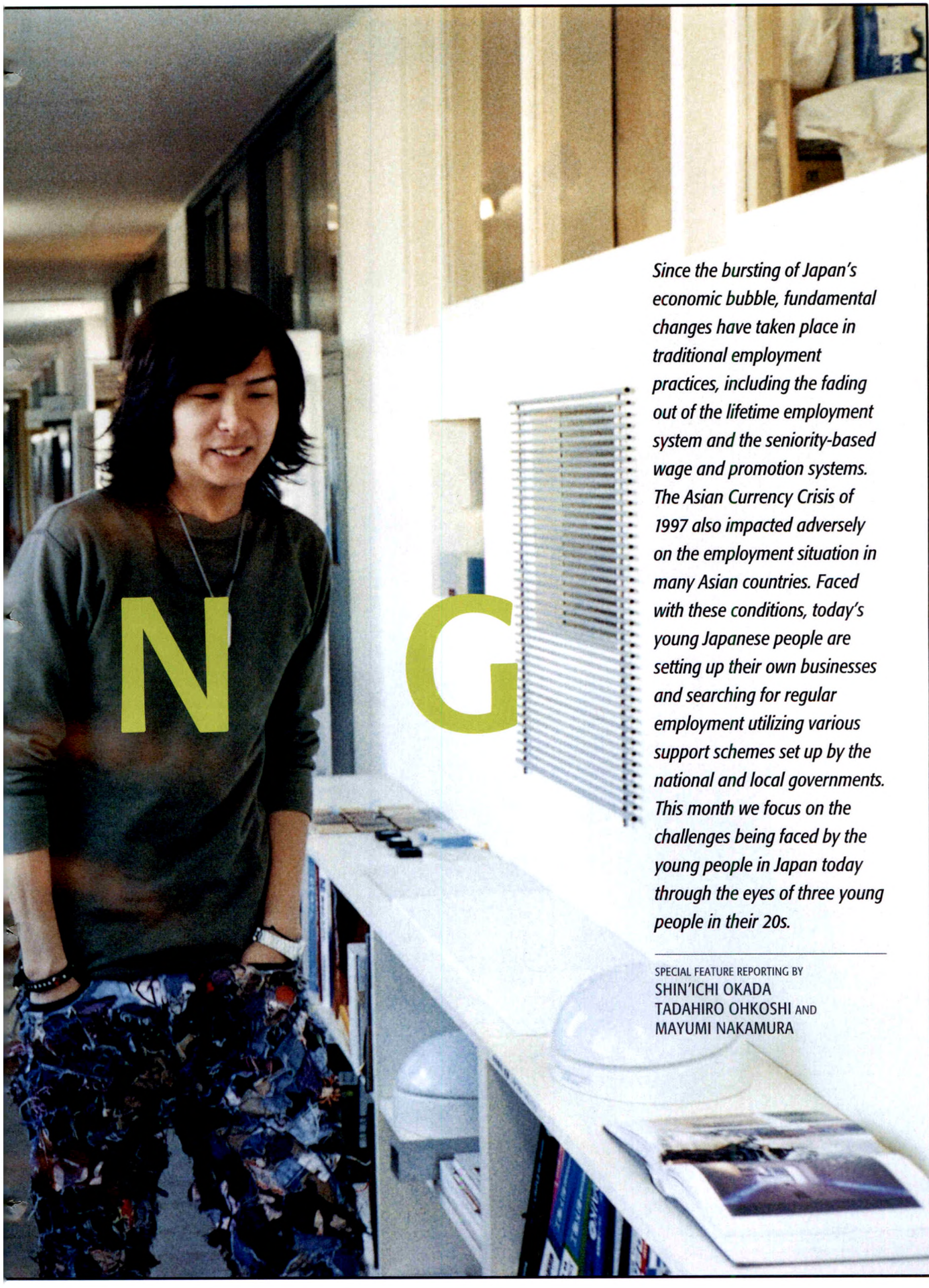

MASARU TATSUKI

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Since the bursting of Japan's economic bubble, fundamental changes have taken place in traditional employment practices, including the fading out of the lifetime employment system and the seniority-based wage and promotion systems. The Asian Currency Crisis of 1997 also impacted adversely on the employment situation in many Asian countries. Faced with these conditions, today's young Japanese people are setting up their own businesses and searching for regular employment utilizing various support schemes set up by the national and local governments. This month we focus on the challenges being faced by the young people in Japan today through the eyes of three young people in their 20s.

SPECIAL FEATURE REPORTING BY
SHIN'ICHI OKADA
TADAHIRO OHKOSHI AND
MAYUMI NAKAMURA

The Ikejiri Institute of Design has leased the facilities of a disused school building to provide space for aspiring creators. In addition to Team Shami, Room 205 is a work studio for an animation artist, an architect, and others.

PHOTOS: MASARU TATSUKI

The day before the show opens, Nakano inspects the finished items one last time.

In cooperation with Setagaya Ward in Tokyo, the Ikejiri Institute of Design (IID) runs a Business Startup Support Project as a way to foster new creative talent. We follow the progress of Keisuke Nakano, a designer who, as a project participant, has launched a new fashion brand.

FASHION DESIGNER

KEISUKE NAKANO, 22

The handmade poster on the wall reads "Road to Tokyo Collection." The clicking and clacking of sewing machines fill the room. Room 205 is the space set aside for the Business Startup Support Project at the Ikejiri Institute of Design (IID) in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo. This is the center of business and creative activity for the members of Team Shami, a group working on a newly launched clothing brand called Shami. The brand, which mainly features articles of clothing crafted of recycled denim, has only just become a reality. The brand's first show is right around the corner, and 22-year-old designer Keisuke Nakano is entirely focused on his sewing machine. Invitations to the show have gone out to apparel manufacturers, stylists and others in the fashion industry. All that remains now is to wait and see what kind of reaction the Shami creations elicit. Nakano shares a glance with Team Shami's 23-year-old merchandiser, Koji Ishida, and laughs as he confides, "Our dream is to someday take part in the Tokyo Collections."

The three members of Team Shami – Nakano, Ishida, and 24-year-old Tomonori Yamaji, who handles press relations – were all classmates at the Hokkaido Dress Maker College, a vocational school for fashion design. At the end of last year, the three quit their respective jobs with clothing companies in order to work on their new clothing brand in the space provided by IID.

In the young people's slang of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island where the three grew up, the word *shami* means "social misfit," or "outsider." As can be seen from their choice of a local dialect word for the brand name, Nakano and his friends feel a strong connection to their home of Hokkaido.

Nakano, who was born the eldest son in a farming family, always took it for granted that he too would farm when he grew up. But when he was in high school, several agricultural college students came to his farm for practical training. What he heard these older boys say changed his direction 180 degrees. "They said that they really wanted to do something other than farm, but that because they were born into farming families, they ended up going to agricultural college. That sounded wrong to me. If you have something you want to do, and then don't do it, well,

Yamaji, normally in charge of press relations, plays the role of mannequin while Nakano checks on a work-in-progress.

that's not right. I've always had an interest in fashion, and my parents said I could do whatever I liked. So I went to fashion school." Even today, Nakano says that if he makes it big in Tokyo, he still wants to return home to Hokkaido eventually.

Nakano did not manage to find a full-time job after graduating from vocational school. So he decided he would pack his bags and head to Tokyo. "There are hardly any opportunities to work in fashion back in Hokkaido. About half of my friends from fashion school ended up having to find work in some other field. If you want to work in fashion, there's really no other place to go but Tokyo."

After arriving in Tokyo, Nakano landed a job working in sales for a clothing company. But he gradually found himself increasingly dissatisfied with what he saw as the fashion industry's obsession with only making marketable products. It was around this time that Nakano and some of his schoolmates who felt similarly decided they would make their own brand of apparel. They would make things they liked the way they liked. They would offer the kind of fashions a wearer could really have fun with. "Excitement that goes beyond the mundane! Items created by us! Items that only we can create!" The Team Shami creative concept sums up perfectly the single-minded determination the three have to be completely original.

Nakano watches as a visitor looks over the Team Shami creations.

It is the fifth day of the Shami show at the IID gallery, halfway through the event. When asked what the public reaction has been like, Nakano says, "Well... It's a tough sell. The general public has been very responsive. But not many people from the apparel industry have even bothered to come...." On that particular day, a representative from a major clothing manufacturer did show quite a bit of interest in their work. But it is still unclear whether that contact is likely to progress from mere pleasantries to more nitty-gritty business discussions.

"I'll make some sales calls..." "All right, then I'll take some of our flyers around to different places..." "Once this show's over, we better start looking for some part-time work..." Almost every evening while the show is underway, the three meet to talk about what to do next. Even when faced with an uphill battle, the bonds between the three are strong. It seems that this partnership is also a source of inspiration for Nakano and his friends. Before leaving the gallery, this reporter asked Nakano to name the next up-and-coming Japanese brand. Was there one that might make an impact similar to that of Undercover, the Japanese brand that made such a splash at the world famous Paris Collections?

"Why, that's us, of course!"

PHOTOS: MASARU TATSUKI

The three enjoy a hearty dinner after work.

At home

What exactly is going on in the hearts and minds of today's young Japanese? Tamaki Saito, a leading Japanese authority on the attitudes of young people, gives his psychological analysis of young people in Japan today.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

Ever since the latter half of the 1970s, young people have been becoming increasingly reluctant to make social commitments. If we look at employment figures, this trend toward desocialization, if you will, can be seen in the significant increase in the number of young people who work as *freeters*, or freelance part-time workers, or NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training), or those who withdraw completely from the community around them.

One striking characteristic of the current generation of young people is their tendency to rate communication skills above anything else. People who communicate well or who can carry on an entertaining or interesting conversation are respected. You might even say that, under this philosophy, a person who succeeds in school or excels in a sport only wins peer recognition if they can communicate well. Overall, the younger generation is becoming ever more polarized. A communicative person might have a hundred friends, but someone who lacks good communication skills will have none. The mobile phone, which these days is a symbol of sociability among young people, is accelerating this polarization process. Youngsters who struggle to communicate often feel that they will never overcome this verbal obstacle. I think this cult of communication is one factor in today's society that robs young people of their hopes and ambitions.

In my view, there is an inversely proportional relationship between the maturity of a society and the maturity of its individual members. As a society matures, its members can survive without maturing and without working. In fact, the whole reason NEETs and those young people who simply withdraw from society can get by is that they receive the benefits of Japan's mature society on a number of levels—and in particular from the kindness of their parents. Frankly speaking, there is a longer moratorium period in a mature society. In the arena of psychiatry, for example, one often hears the view that people reach psychological maturity at the age of 35. The so-called adolescent period gets longer and longer. This is another indicator of just how the number of immature young people not participating in society is increasing.

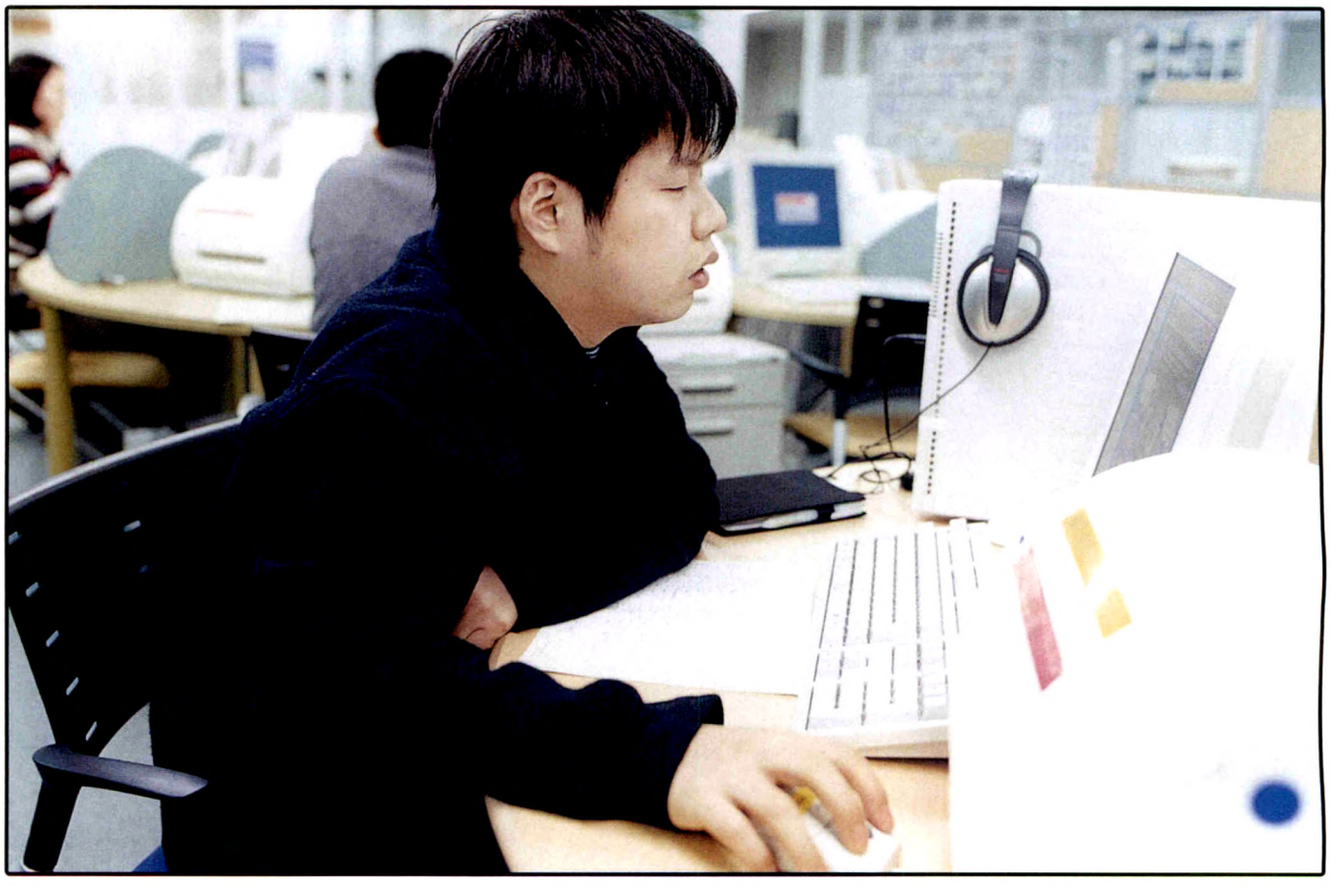
In Europe and North America, a person is considered independent when they leave their parents' home. But in Japan that same equation does not hold true. We live in a culture in which it is not at all unusual for grown children to continue to live with their parents well into adulthood. While some may view this as discouraging maturity with grown children acting as parasites, and increasing the possibility of social withdrawal, on the positive side, this can be considered a sign of devotion, and an opportunity to return some of the received parental love and support. And there are some very positive aspects to multiple generations living together. It is unrealistic to expect that absolutely every young person will be able to fit perfectly into society. There will always be young people who do not find a place for themselves. However, when Japanese youth are unable to adapt to society, family support serves extremely well as a safety net. I think this aspect of Japan's traditional society deserves positive recognition.

TAMAKI SAITO is currently the medical director at Sofukai Sasaki Hospital. He specializes in psychopathology of adolescents and youth. He is also active in the treatment and support of people dealing with social withdrawal and in education about the issue. His many publications include *Social Withdrawal*.

PP. 13, 19, 25 ILLUSTRATIONS: TATSURO KIUCHI

Shuichi Koitabashi takes a lonely stroll along the main street in Tokyo's trendy Shibuya district.

AYASHI ISHIMARU



PHOTOS: ATSUSHI ISHIHARA

Koitabashi searches for employment opportunities at the Tokyo branch of the Young Job Spot.

Under the current difficult employment situation, many young people in Japan are turning to freelance, part-time work while also looking for some kind of regular full-time employment. We examine the situation through the eyes of one such freeter.

FREETER

SHUICHI KOITABASHI, 24

To tell you the truth, whenever I meet friends who are regular full-time company employees, I kind of feel uneasy and somewhat embarrassed. I feel like I'm a bit out of place in their company now." So says 24-year-old *freeter* Shuichi Koitabashi as he expresses his true feelings on the predicament in which he currently finds himself.

The Japanese word "freeter" is a derivation of the English word "free" and the German word for worker, "arbeiter." According to the Cabinet Office 2003 White Paper on National Living Standards, the term "freeter" is defined as those within the 15–34 age bracket (excluding students and homemakers) who are in part-time employment, are temporarily dispatched to companies from temp agencies, or are unemployed but actively seeking full-time employment.

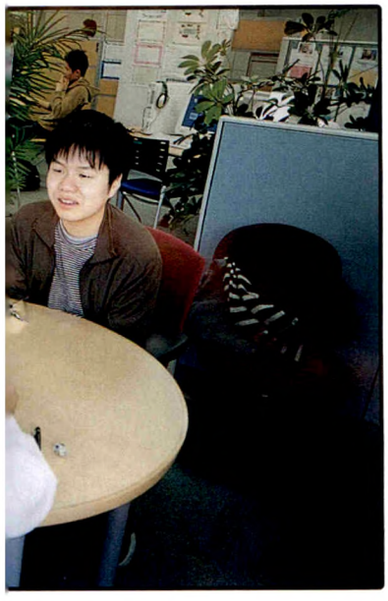
Since the latter half of the 1990s, many young Japanese people have been unable to find regular full-time employment and have been forced to become freeters – although this situation has improved with the recent economic recovery. Koitabashi graduated from university in March 2004, but his efforts to find regular employment have all been in vain. For close to two years now he has worked as a freeter.

Koitabashi hails from the city of Aizu-Wakamatsu, Fukushima Prefecture in the north of Japan. At school his grades were excellent and earned him a place at the prestigious Niigata University. However, Koitabashi reveals, "I was always careful to do exactly as my parents or teachers wanted, and meekly followed the path that they set out for me. But because I was always so passive, I found that I wasn't able to be assertive or take any real positive action when it came to realizing my own dreams, or finding a job that I really wanted to do. When I look back on it, I think that was a major reason behind me not being able to find regular employment."

Against his better judgment, he returned home to live with his parents in Aizu-Wakamatsu after graduating from university

and began life as a freeter. However, his repeated failure to land a regular job gradually transformed into a deep psychological scar. And this, in turn, manifested itself as an inferiority complex. "I just couldn't find anything positive to write about myself when I was applying for jobs however much I tried," says Koitabashi dejectedly.

At the end of his tether, he took the plunge and decided to head for Tokyo in November last year. "As long as I stayed with my parents, there was no way that I could become mentally independent. Another reason I decided to come to Tokyo was that a friend from university, who had found regular employment in Tokyo, told me about the YJS, or Young Job Spot, scheme."

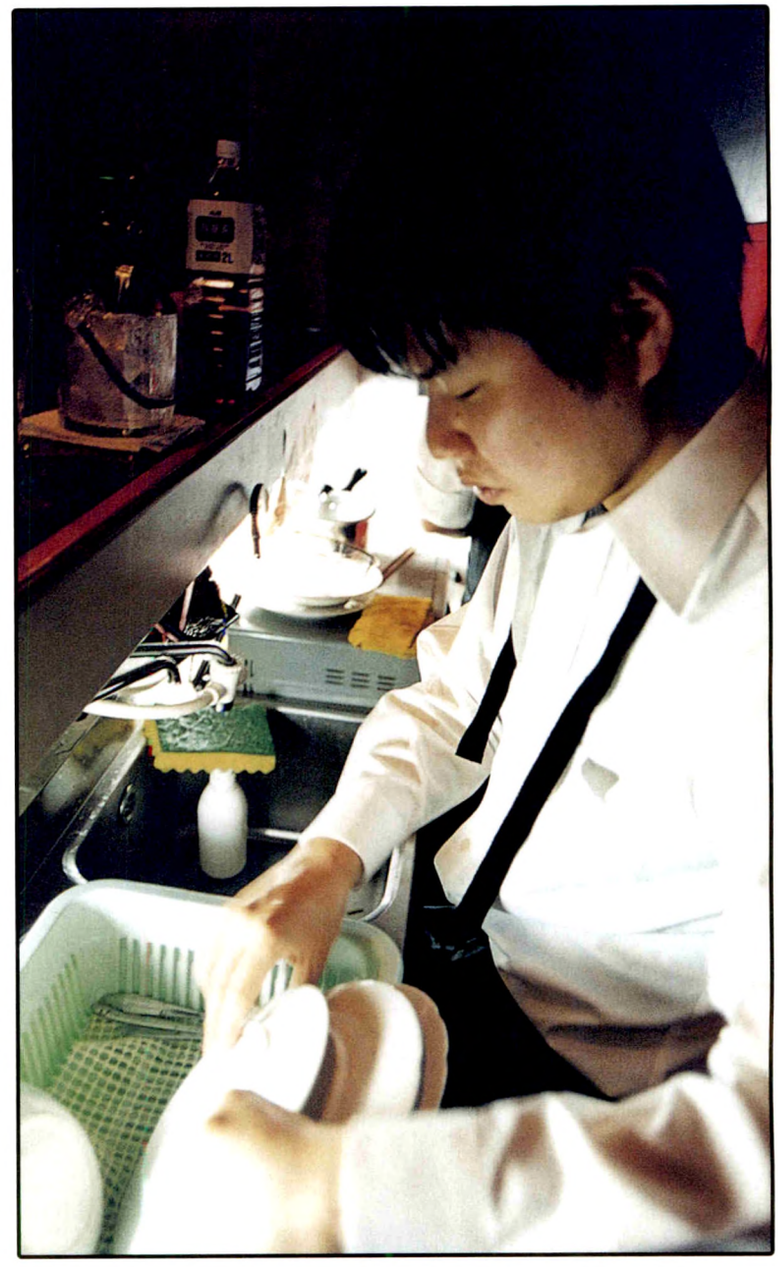


YJS is a program supported by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare which has set up employment support bodies in 14 locations across Japan. Its main feature is that it provides a range of services for young people who are willing to find employment but don't really know how to go about it. Koitabashi based himself at the YJS Tokyo branch which is located in the trendy Shibuya district popular with young people and frequented by many who find themselves in a similar predicament to Koitabashi. It was here that he began his search for employment anew.

Koitabashi harbors ambitions of becoming a computer programmer or software engineer, and reveals that this is because he finds it difficult to relate to people and feels that an IT-related position would better suit his personality. For the time being, he just wants to take his time to look for a promising position, and he's pretty sure something will turn up by the time he hits thirty. On the other hand, he admits to feeling slightly anxious when he reads the recruitment ads that stipulate that the position on offer is only open to those under the age of 25. It's at times like this that he becomes acutely aware that he doesn't have as much time to play with as he originally thought.

Koitabashi currently spends his days attending seminars and counseling sessions at the YJS and is already beginning to feel the benefit. "My confidence is slowly returning and I'm starting to feel more and more ready to take on new challenges," he says. Recently, he got his first taste of life as a freeter in Tokyo with a part-time job in a diner. "It's been an invaluable experience as it's helped me to come to terms with having to deal with people. I can already feel my horizons broadening," beams Koitabashi.

This reporter finished up by asking Koitabashi what finding regular employment will mean to him. "That's easy, independence. I really want to become independent as quickly as possible," he replies, and there's little doubt that his response sums up the hopes and aspirations of the vast majority of freeters.



Center: Koitabashi attends an employment counseling session at the Tokyo YJS.

Above: Koitabashi at work in a Tokyo diner. Mixing with customers has been an invaluable experience.

ATSUSHI ISHIHARA

Koitabashi relaxes at Tokyo's Inokashira Park as he speaks about his future prospects.

Despite improvements brought about by the recent economic recovery, the employment situation facing young people in Japan today remains severe. In order to better understand the situation, we spoke to Yuji Genda, an authority on young people's employment issues, and a member of the Cabinet Office's special survey committee for Japan's 21st Century Vision.

FINDING EMPLOYMENT

According to statistics released in 2005 by the Statistics Bureau of Japan, the Japanese unemployment rate was 4.7%. However, the younger the age group, the higher that figure jumps—to 6.4% for 25 to 29 year-olds, 9.0% for 20 to 24 year-olds, and 11.7% for 15 to 19 year-olds. Clearly, the young people of Japan are living under difficult employment conditions.

Starting in the latter half of the 1990s, the Japanese economy struggled through an extended period of economic stagnation. Many companies were forced to carry out major restructuring, including reducing employee numbers. It wasn't easy, in part because Japanese government regulations regarding the dismissal of employees are among the strictest in the world. Middle-aged white collar workers made up a significant proportion of the surplus staff. But in order to lay such employees off, companies must meet a long list of conditions. For that reason, many companies reduced their overall employee numbers by drastically cutting the number of new graduates they hired. Thus, while the jobs of middle-aged workers are protected as "existing rights," young people—by and large new graduates—face unprecedented difficulty in securing stable employment. Their situation is sometimes described as an "ice age," or even "super ice age."

Consequently, many young people who have been unable to find work end up getting by as *"freeters,"* or freelance part-time workers. The freeter population is estimated at approximately 4.17 million people (2003 Cabinet Office estimate). Not only have these young people been unable to secure the kind of jobs they would prefer, but over time, the income disparity between freeters and full-time regular employees of the same age only grows. Their social and economic position is far from secure, and naturally this does not bode well for the future stability and well-being of Japanese society.

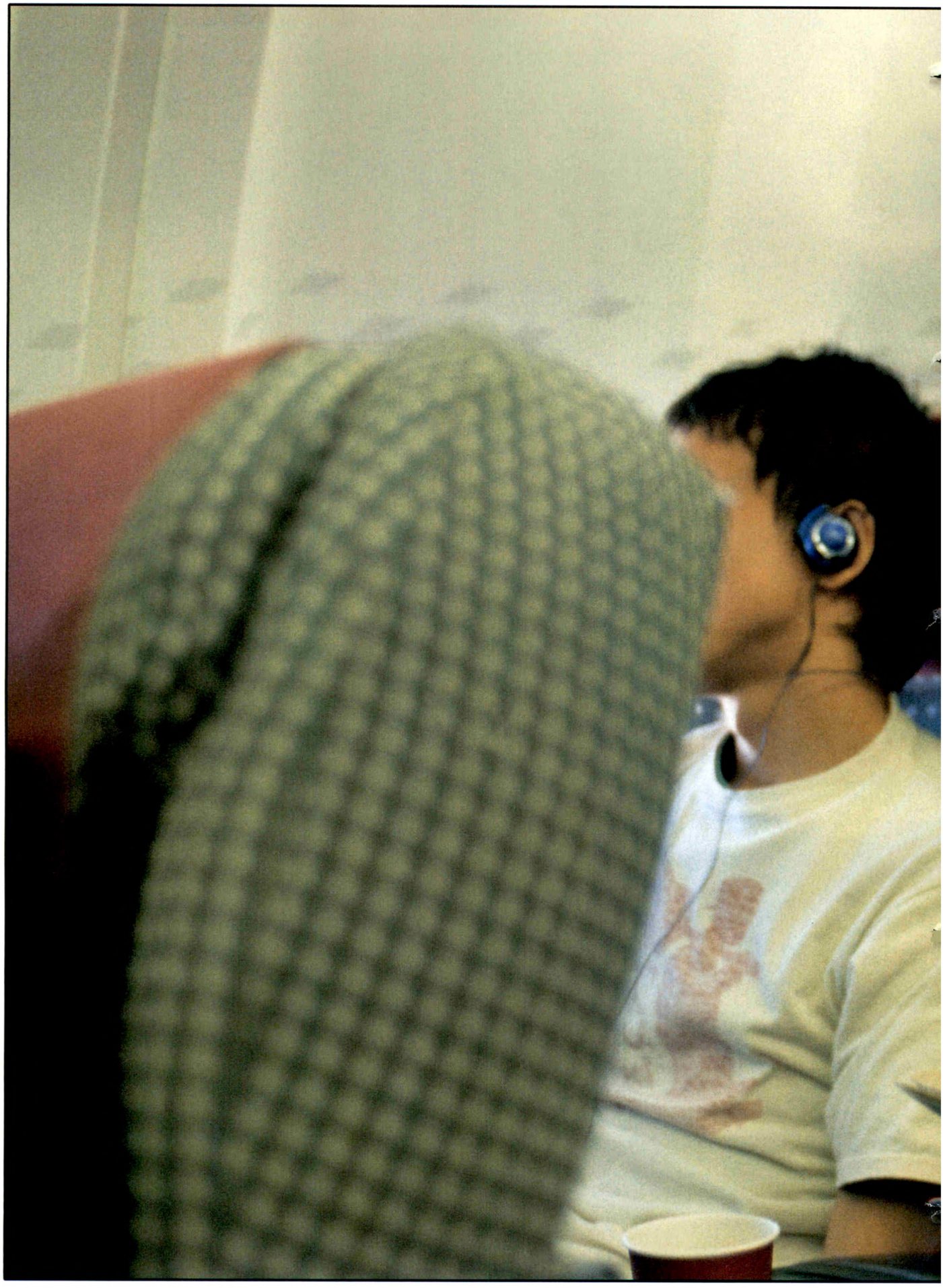
Moreover, in recent years more and more attention is being paid in Japan to the increasing numbers of young people who have lost confidence after repeated failure to find a job, who have given up on seeking employment, or who find themselves paralyzed to do anything when faced with the hurdles to securing a job. This category of jobless youth is called NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). As of 2004, there were some 640,000 NEETs in Japan (2005 Ministry of Health, Labour and welfare estimate). And the number of NEETs grows every year. In this way, many young people are dropping out of the Japanese labor market, which in turn drives up the unemployment figures for lower age brackets.

Some in Japan simply write freeters and NEETs off as lazy young people who lack the will to work. However, the fact remains that ever since the end of the 1990s, many companies have overemphasized competitiveness and short-term profits to the detriment of young people, who are no longer provided with a chance at employment and long-term mentoring.

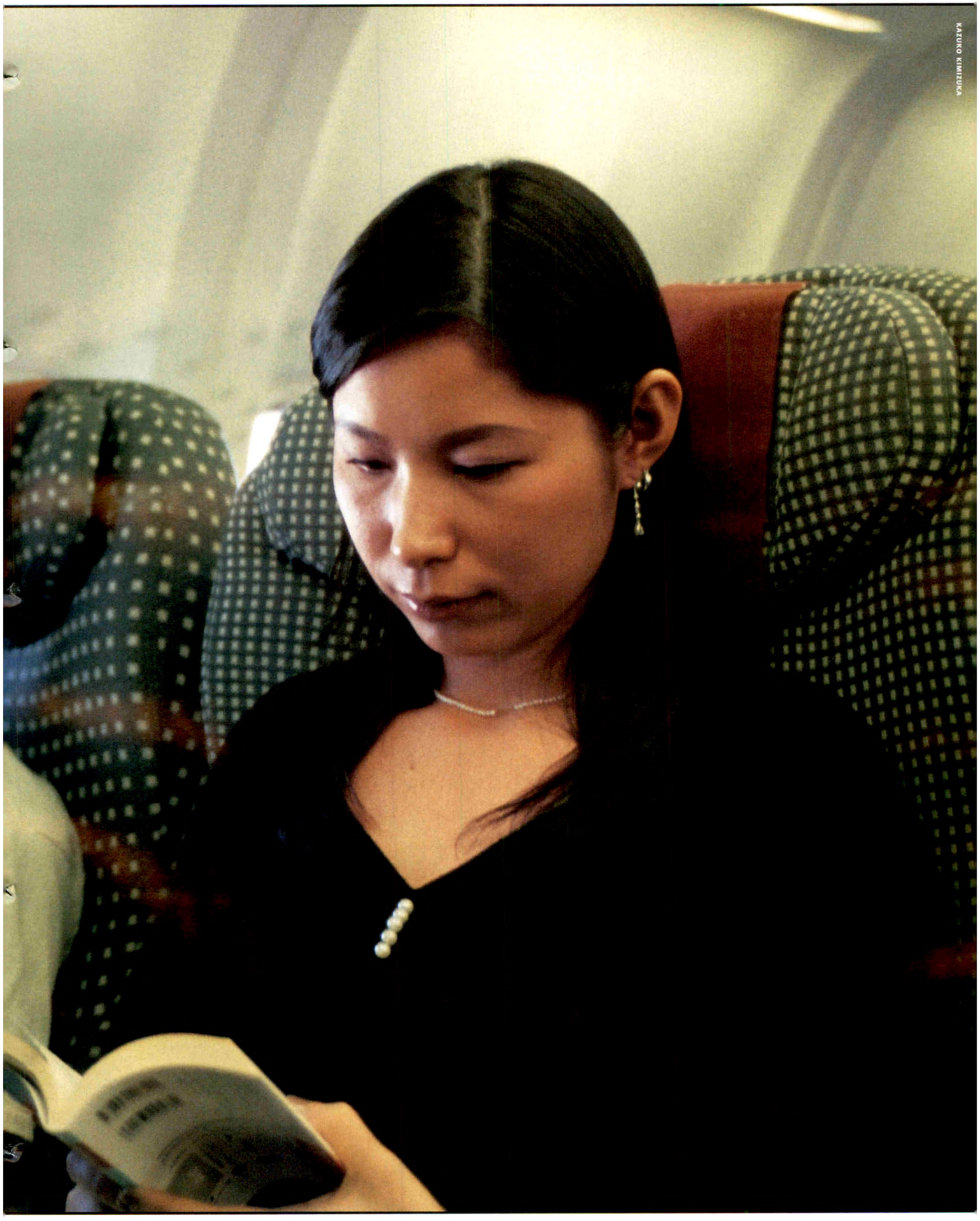
For that reason, the presence of so many freeters and NEETs in Japan today might accurately be said to reflect a weakening of the will of society to nurture its youth.

After graduating from the University of Tokyo, **YUJI GENDA** worked as a visiting researcher at Harvard University and Oxford University. In 2002, he took up his current post as associate professor of labor economics with the Institute of Social Science at the University of Tokyo. He is known as an expert in NEET-related research in Japan, and has many publications to his name.

ENTREPRENEUR



An avid reader, Suko is never without a book when she is on the move. She says books sometimes give her new business ideas.


KAZUKO KIMIZUKA

PHOTOS: KAZUKO KIMIZUKA

Suko organizes get-togethers for people in different types of business, not just related to coaching. This meeting has attracted a wide range of people, such as fashion designers, web creators, and people from securities companies.

ENTREPRENEUR

HARUKA SUKO, 28

While still in her 20s, Haruka Suko started up a coaching company. We look at her perspective on work and life, which spurred her to become an entrepreneur.

There aren't enough people in Japan willing to face up to the challenges ahead and take any kind of risk!"

This rather provocative statement is the slogan for a campaign that encourages people to start up their own business. The campaign is known as the Dream Gate Project, and it has the backing of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Following the collapse of the economic bubble, Japan's declining economic vitality has become very noticeable: the number of companies going out of business now exceeds the number of businesses starting up, and in the rankings of international competitiveness, Japan has fallen from first place in 1992 to 21st place in 2005 (International Institute for Management Development figures). Is there no way to revitalize Japan by igniting the sleeping entrepreneurial spirit of the younger generation? The Dream Gate Project is trying to fire up this spirit through learning events and internships.

But there are some willing to take a challenge. Two years ago, Haruka Suko started up JusTrade Corporation at the young age of 26. Suko now shares management responsibilities with director Kaori Matsumura (27). The company's core business is providing coaching services. Coaching is a method of nurturing human resources that was originally developed in the US, and since the 1990s has spread around the world. A coach holds dialogues with a client, with the aim of bringing out the client's hidden potential to the maximum. This technique has been used in Japan for improving the performance of sales personnel and in teaching bosses the skills for directing their subordinates. JusTrade has already had great success with banks and temping agencies, and business is really taking off.

Before she first encountered coaching, Suko had already amassed considerable experience, both in business and as a volunteer in Japan and overseas. After graduating from high school Suko studied international studies and information systems at American University in Washington DC. Returning to Japan, she landed a job at an IT-related consulting firm. But she soon felt she wanted to do something that would make more of a contribution to society. She left her job and became involved with international cooperation work, an area that she had been interested in since her student days. She took part in an American NGO program, and then headed off for Brazil.

Haruka Suko gives a coaching lecture. Coaching lectures such as this are a mainstay of her company

PHOTOS: KAZUKO KIMIZUKA

Haruka Suko at Tokyo's Haneda Airport about to fly off to Kyushu to give another lecture.

She first raised US$30,000 in street collections over the course of two months in the US, and then used this money to build houses in a low-income community and give support to street children in northeast Brazil. While she was in Brazil, she came face-to-face with children who had been through appalling suffering, such as a pair of siblings who had seen their drug addict mother shot to death before their eyes, and a young girl who had run away from home to escape the clutches of a neighbor who raped her almost every day.

"The strange thing is, I didn't feel that there was anything especially pathetic or pitiable about these kids," says Suko. "I really felt that we were one and the same – the only difference between them and me was that we had grown up in different environments." At the same time, though, she did admit to feeling powerless. "Even if I continued building houses in low-income communities, the system that creates poverty would not change one bit," she says. It was then that she came across the words of Mother Teresa; "Developed countries suffer from poverty of understanding, poverty of will, of loneliness, of lack of love and spirit. There is no greater disease in the world today than this."

"The people in the developed world work as hard as they can just for themselves, and turn a blind eye to the suffering of the world," says Suko. "So I figured, if I could change people's hearts, it would change the world." This reformation in the hearts and minds of the developed world became Suko's ultimate aim in life but no matter how hard she looked, she wasn't able to find a company or NPO that could transform her philosophy into reality. So if no one else was doing it, she would do it herself—there was always the option of starting up her own company. It was at this time that Suko first came into contact with coaching when a friend introduced her to Matsumura, who was then coaching on a freelance basis. One aspect of the coaching business is that it uses communication to bring out the richness in people's hearts, and Suko realized that in this sense part of the coaching business was pointing toward her own goal.

Suko does not limit her business to coaching; she will take on any business, as long as it will bring about a change in people's hearts. She is currently working on a project called GAIAMOR to collect and translate into ten languages moving or heart-warming stories from around the world, and then set up the media to distribute them. She started on the Internet, but she is now looking at broadcasting her stories over the radio or publishing them. "We plan to have a promotion site up and running in April," she says. Haruka Suko is a woman who gets things done, and her latest challenge is already well underway.

Suko shares a moment with Justrade director Kaori Matsumura at their Tokyo office.

After the experiences of the high economic growth and the collapse of the bubble economy, the attitudes of Japan's young people have changed radically. Tamotsu Sengoku, who for many years has compared youth attitudes in different countries, gives his analysis of Japanese youth today.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

The Japan Youth Research Institute has carried out attitude surveys among high school students in Japan, the US, China, and other countries over the last 30 years. The particular character of Japan's youth has become apparent through the results of recent international comparisons.

First, Japanese youth have become more inclined to be satisfied with their present situation, and less future-oriented. According to the Institute's 2002 survey of attitudes about the future among high school students, 55.8% of Chinese high school students felt they "should think carefully about the future," followed by 42.6% of US high school students. The lowest was Japan, at just 29.9%. Conversely, the highest proportion who felt that "if life is fun now, that's good enough" was 15.7% in Japan, compared to 14% in the US and 7.6% in China.

In psychology, Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs (Abraham Maslow, 1943) is well known. Maslow divided all human needs into five levels, with the basic physiological needs essential to maintain life such as food, water, and sleep at the bottom level, safety needs at the next level, and so on up to self-actualization needs—finding the purpose to one's existence—at the top. According to this theory, when the needs of one level are satisfied, people will then seek to satisfy the needs at the next level; for example, once a person's basic physiological needs are met, the need for physical and psychological safety will emerge. People will seek self-actualization once their other needs are met. The problem is, though, that Japanese kids just don't seem to fit this model. It is just as if a new type of human has emerged that doesn't progress any further once the basic needs for food, clothing and shelter are met—they just stay at that level.

Furthermore, the desire for upward mobility is becoming weaker in Japan. We asked respondents about their life goals in the 2002 survey, and the greatest proportion to answer "achieving a high position in society" was 32.6% in China, followed by 25.4% in the US. Japan only managed a paltry 9.6%. There is a trend among Japanese youth to rate highly hobbies or having a good time as life goals. It feels very much as though young people in China or the US are in general more strongly future-oriented and more inclined to believe that maturity and adulthood are good.

Japan has seen the economic bubble burst, and with it huge, supposedly invincible companies such as Yamaichi Securities go under. The effect of such a massive change on young people will not be small. They now feel that they are no longer assured the benefits of typically Japanese employment practices such as lifetime employment and seniority by length of service, which the previous generations enjoyed. Japan used to be an economic animal, striving for growth and aiming to be number one, but this is now no longer the case. The pursuit of some sort of goal, part of the character of society, has been lost. Contemporary Japanese society appears to have lost sight of a big picture and lacks a vision toward which to strive. Because of this young people are increasingly at a loss to know what goals they should have.

TAMOTSU SENGOKU is a lawyer and director of the Japan Youth Research Institute. He is known as the leading expert on youth in Japan. His publications include *Young People* and the *New Egoism and Japan's High School Girls.*

Disaster Relief

As natural disasters continue to plague the world, Japan is dispatching members of its Disaster Relief Team in the hope that just a few more lives may be saved.

Left: The Japan Disaster Relief Team immediately dispatched members to help remove rubble and rescue victims of the 2003 Algerian earthquake.

Below: Members of the Japan Disaster Relief Team providing medical care to victims of the 2005 Pakistan earthquake.

In recent years the world has experienced one natural disaster after another. The Indian Ocean tsunami occurred in December 2004 and last October a major earthquake also hit the northeastern region of Pakistan. On both occasions Japan dispatched the Japan Disaster Relief Team (JDR) to engage in rescue and relief operations. In the immediate aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami, Japan dispatched 14 JDR teams totaling 279 people and the Self-Defense Forces sent two teams totaling 1,600 personnel to four different countries, making it the largest relief operation in Japan's history.

The origins of the JDR can be traced back to the late 1970s when war in Indochina led to huge numbers of Cambodian refugees. Many Western nations—with their array of private volunteer organizations—responded swiftly by sending medical relief teams. However, Japan's government and private-based organizations did not have a system to allow them to respond with the same speed. This led to criticism from foreign countries that, "Japan leans toward the supply of financial or material relief-aid, something which lacks a human face."

In 1982, with the cooperation of numerous public and private hospitals, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Japan Medical Team for Disaster Relief (JMTDR) to provide assistance for refugees or disaster victims. Members of the JMTDR were also dispatched to give aid to victims of the Ethiopian famine and drought that became particularly serious around 1984 and the massive earthquake which devastated Mexico City in September 1985.

However, their limitations became apparent following the Great Mexico Earthquake: "We could hear people groaning under the rubble but there was nothing we could do for them," was a common response. With this the members of the medical team came to realize the need for a rescue team to extract the victims from beneath the rubble. This led to the enactment of the Japan Disaster Relief Team Law in 1987, making it possible to dispatch a combination of rescue teams, medical teams and teams of experts. This Law was amended in 1992, enabling Japan's Self-Defense Forces to be dispatched to provide relief assistance. Under the amended law, aid for refugees from conflict zones is coordinated by the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters in the Cabinet Office, which assumes responsibility for the activities of relief teams for natural and humanitarian disasters.

Yasuhiro Yamamoto, Professor and Chairman, Department of Emergency and Critical Care Medicine, Nippon Medical School, who oversees the medical team comprising over 600 registered volunteer members, has been active around the world since the Cambodian refugee crisis of 1979.

One particular experience has stayed uppermost in his memory. Back in 1984, he was treating a starving young girl in Ethiopia. She had such a severe case of malnutrition that her blood vessels were too weak for her body to accept intravenous feeding. However, thanks to dedicated treatment the girl miraculously managed to avoid death. As the day approached when she was due to leave his care, the girl's grandmother came to see Professor Yamamoto. The old lady knelt before him and tried to kiss his feet. When he quickly moved to get her to stand up again, she said, "I want to show my gratitude to the doctor who saved my granddaughter's life, but I have nothing to give you. This is the way that I always express my feelings of gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ." Even now, more than 20 years later, Professor Yamamoto still becomes emotional when he recalls that scene.

"Advanced medical technology is making great progress in the developed nations of the world but there are still many, many people who do not have access to bare minimum levels of medical care. In that respect, emergency medical care at the time of disasters can be seen as the most fundamental of medical practices. Everyone in the world should have the right to receive such care," asserts Professor Yamamoto.

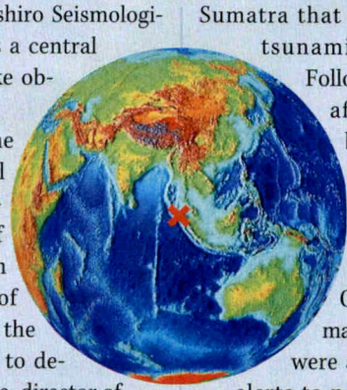
Unimaginable tragedies still occur all over the world. The members of the JDR will continue to rush to the scenes of such disasters and do their best to save the lives of as many people as possible.

— SHIN'ICHI OKADA

PHOTOS: JICA

Averting Catastrophe

Mountainous Nagano Prefecture in the center of the Japanese archipelago has a chain of peaks towering over 3,000 meters. Deep under the foothills near the town of Matsushiro is the Matsushiro Seismological Observatory, which is run by the Japan Meteorological Agency. The observatory lies 100 meters underground in a series of tunnels running 350 meters from north to south and 150 meters from east to west through the bedrock, which house a battery of sophisticated devices for measuring tremors in the Earth's crust. Equipped with a broadband seismometer and a diverse range of other seismometers, the Matsushiro Seismological Observatory performs a central role in Japan's earthquake observation network.



The instruments in the Matsushiro Seismological Observatory are both accurate and sensitive. "If there is an earthquake with a Richter Scale reading of five or over anywhere in the world, we would be able to detect it," says Yuzo Ishikawa, director of the facility. In fact, the facility picked up the earthquake off the coast of Northern Sumatra that caused the Indian Ocean tsunami on December 26, 2004. Following that, it monitored the aftershocks, and when the biggest aftershock occurred on March 29, 2005, a warning was immediately sent out to the countries along the coast of the Indian Ocean. Thanks to this information, some of these countries were able to put out evacuation alerts to people in low-lying coastal areas for the first time.

On February 6 and 7, 2006, 14 officials

The giant tsunami of December 26, 2004, wrought tragedy on an unprecedented scale. We look at the multifaceted efforts Japan is making to help the countries with Indian Ocean coastlines put an early warning system in place.

Left: Participants gained valuable information on the course which took place at the Matsuhiro Seismological Observatory.

Below left: The Live Internet Seismic Survey shows the epicenter of the Indian Ocean earthquake.

AFP • JIJI

Startled residents and tourists in the Thai resort of Phuket flee from the December 2004 tsunami. In some areas the height of the tsunami exceeded 10 meters.

responsible for tsunami observation and prediction from 13 countries with Indian Ocean coastlines gathered at the Matsushiro Seismological Observatory to see this guardian angel for themselves. They had all come to Japan to participate in the Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning System Seminar hosted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) from January 23 to February 10; there were 24 participants in the seminar, and the 14 who visited Matsushiro Seismological Observatory had all opted to take part in the course on tsunami observation and prediction. They came to Matsushiro to study the latest expertise in processing the data from seismic ripples and determining the epicenter of earthquakes.

"In order to give out highly accurate tsunami warnings, it is absolutely essential for us to be able to pinpoint the exact epicenter and determine the size of earthquakes that cause tsunamis," explains Ishikawa. With this in mind, the course was designed to combine observation of the various seismometers installed in the underground tunnels with practical, hands-on training. For the latter, the participants used data from the Live Internet Seismic Server (LISS), which can access in real time information on seismic ripples measured around the world, to determine the exact epicenter and size of earthquakes.

The Indian Ocean tsunami claimed over 300,000 lives and caused damage estimated at US$13 billion. When the dreadful scenes were broadcast around the world, there must have been a great many people wondering whether having an early warning system in place wouldn't have done something to lessen this terrible tragedy. To avert such disasters in the future, the international community has come together to cooperate over the construction of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS). The present seminar was one of a number of seminars in which officials responsible for earthquake and tsunami observation and disaster prevention in countries around the Indian Ocean were invited to Japan to acquire first hand experience of tsunami early warning mechanisms and operations.

At the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on the Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami held in Jakarta on January 6, 2005, in response to the disaster, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pledged support for the prompt construction of a tsunami early warning system in the Indian Ocean as one of the main pillars of Japan's contributions. At the same time, he announced that of the US$250 million pledged as grant money for emergency assistance through international organizations, US$4 million would be earmarked directly for constructing the early warning system.

At the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in the city of Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, from January 18 to 22, 2005, the Special Session on the Indian Ocean Disaster was held as an emergency session to discuss a tsunami early warning system in the Indian Ocean in accordance with a proposal made by Prime Minister Koizumi. It was confirmed at this session that a framework would be constructed in the Indian Ocean like the Pacific Ocean Tsunami Early Warning System, which was constructed following the devastation caused by the 1960 earthquake in Chile and went into operation in 1968. As a provisional measure, it was also confirmed that the Japan Meteorological Agency and the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) would cooperate to provide information on tsunamis in the Indian Ocean.

Since then, Japan has sent earthquake and tsunami observation experts from the Japan Meteorological Agency to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), a branch of UNESCO that will act as the main coordinator for the early warning system construction project. Additionally, the network of domestic seismic observatories, which includes Matsushiro Seismological Observatory, has been sending seismic surveillance data to the countries with coastlines on the Indian Ocean since March 2005. Japan is thus continuing its contributions to the early establishment of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System along three lines: by donating money, by dispatching human resources, and by sharing its knowledge and expertise.

"In Sri Lanka there was only one seismograph in the whole country, because we almost never have earthquakes," says Kankanamge Bernard Nihal Prame Wanniachchi of the Sri Lankan Geological Survey and Mines Bureau, who took part in the visit to Matsushiro Seismological Observatory. "But because we are now able to get the latest data from far-off countries like Japan, the Sri Lankan 24-hour tsunami observation and warning system is nearly up and running."

— TADAHIRO OHKOSHI

Inner Beauty

In the final part of a four-part series, beauty journalist Mayumi Kurata introduces Japan's recent 'detox' boom.

> "It seems that there is growing awareness of **beautifying oneself naturally from the inside,** and not only superficial or supplementary body care"

Several years ago, gossip that trend-setting models and celebrities were fasting on their days off helped make the practice fashionable among young women. The currently-popular fasting style can be done quite casually and safely, and involves the use of juices or soup to provide minimal nutritional support. Although more serious fasting programs involving a several-day stay at a suburban hotel or inn are available, most people adopt a more reasonable approach by fasting on their own, using retail health drinks or by becoming "weekend vegetarians." The reasons for fasting are diverse, and include: resting one's digestive tract after habitual overeating, promoting the elimination of fats and toxins accumulating in the body, and healing the body and spirit. Although the aim of fasting is not weight reduction per se, rumors that fasting can contribute to weight loss helped to fuel the practice's popularity.

In the past, the main ways to achieve health and beauty were to "supplement" one's body with something, such as cosmetics and vitamins. However, thanks to the fasting trend, a major shift has taken place in thinking which stresses the importance of trimming excesses such as toxins and bodily wastes. An increasing number of products and services related to this theme have appeared on the market. For those without the courage to fast, 'detox massages' and 'detox spas' can help prevent swelling and weight gain by enhancing the metabolism. The dietary fiber in so-called 'detox foods' and 'detox drinks' also prevents obesity and eases constipation. The phrase 'detox' is now a keyword for boosting sales of health-related items.

Bedrock baths and germanium baths which promote sweating and increase metabolism by warming the body are also part of the detox trend. Some cosmetic treatment clinics offer 'chelation therapy," which rids the body of heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and aluminum that can unknowingly accumulate due to environmental pollution. The importance of detoxifying has drawn significant attention along with the growing awareness of aging and disease prevention.

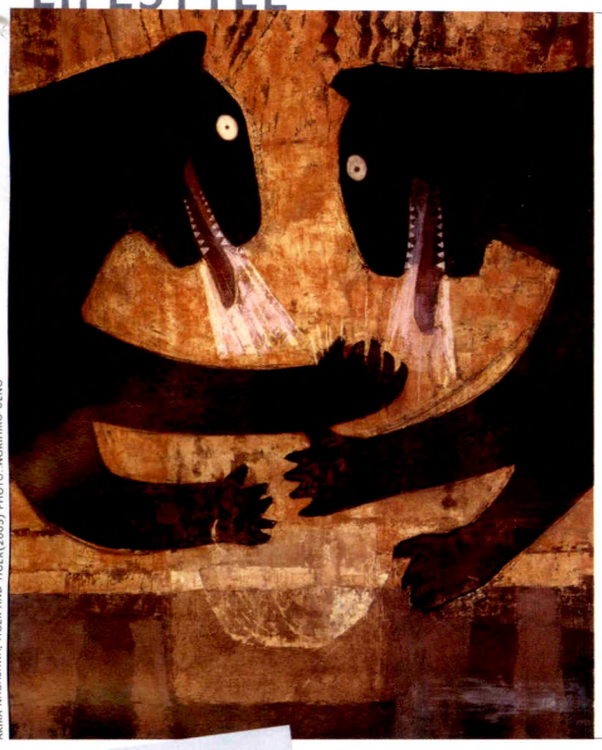
Massage, bath therapy, and exercise styles such as yoga and pilates are now becoming rapidly established as in-home relaxation techniques. These actions can halt the build-up of waste products in the body by enhancing one's metabolism. It seems that there is growing awareness of beautifying oneself naturally from the inside, and not only superficial or supplementary body care. Some women say that detoxifying regimes like fasting allow them to completely rid themselves of mental fatigue and stress. This itself, of course, is one purpose of detox.

Moreover, the 'lifestyles of health and sustainability' (or LOHAS) boom, which originally started in US, has taken the Japanese beauty market by storm over the past year. In one cosmetics boutique in Tokyo's upmarket Ginza area, some 80% of sales are comprised of environmentally-friendly, LOHAS-related brands which are made from natural materials. Of course, simple, natural products created from plant constituents, oil and salt, which are the true origin of cosmetics, form the bulk of these items.

Some view this movement as simply a transition, caused by an overload of new cosmetics and beauty methods. However, the idea of eliminating excesses before supplementing is quite reasonable in terms of beauty and health. The detox boom could be an excellent opportunity to reexamine the current status of Japanese women and the cosmetics industry as a whole after the wild trends of the past decade or more.

A beauty journalist for more than 20 years, **MAYUMI KURATA** currently writes for the beauty sections in women's magazines and a national daily newspaper.

BEAUTY MALL EXCITE (AKASAKA, TOKYO) GENEROUSLY COOPERATED WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THIS ARTICLE. • PHOTO: KUMA



AKIRA NAGASAWA, *TIGER AND TIGER*(2005) PHOTO: NORIHIRO UENO

No Border: Nihonga Exhibition

The Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo hosted No Border: From Nihonga to Nihonga, an exhibition of traditional Japanese-style paintings by seven artists in their thirties. The term Nihonga refers to a style of painting dating from ancient times using rock pigments and glue to paint on handmade washi paper or silk, as opposed to Western-style oil painting which was imported into Japan during the Meiji (1868–1912) period. However, in recent years Nihonga artists have been mixing traditional materials with newer acrylic paints or oil pastels and incorporating their own individual styles. These changes seem to be blurring the borders between Western and Japanese-style painting. The exhibition featured 90 works created since 2000 by such modern Nihonga artists as Kumi Machida and Hisashi Tenmyoya. The show, which ran until March 26, 2006, was an excellent opportunity for viewers to witness the latest developments in Japanese-style painting.

SANYO ELECTRIC CO., LTD.

Images of Europe

In-between, a recently-released series of photo collections shot in 25 different European Union nations, is drawing significant attention. The 14-book series features works by major Japanese photographers and the books showcase photographs taken from the private perspectives of thirteen artists, including Takashi Homma and Chihiro Minato, who visited European Union member nations in 2004. The EU-Japan Fest Japan Committee designed the collections to commemorate the changing face of Europe against the backdrop of EU expansion. One of the aims of the project is to introduce the 'new Europe' to Japan, while at the same time giving Europeans the opportunity to view their countries as seen from a Japanese perspective. OSIRIS, the firm marketing the collection, notes that the photo books are proving extremely popular, with the full 14-book set already sold out.

pd DESIGN STUDIO

Gentle LIGHT

While the word 'light bulb' conjures up images of a round glass object for most people, the *Skin Light Bulb* by the Kyoto-based design duo pd DESIGN STUDIO turns this idea on its head. As the name implies, the silicon-covered light bulb itself serves as a LED-powered lighting fixture. The lamp's soft texture is as smooth as a baby's skin. This delicate, attractive lamp is sure to attract the curious touches of passersby for years to come.

Enduring POWER

Sanyo Electric Co., Ltd. has launched the world's first rechargeable battery which, like regular dry-cell batteries, can be used straight out of the package. The *Eneloop* is extremely economical, and capable of almost 1,000 recharges for use in a variety of equipment. It also boasts very low natural discharge and can withstand low temperatures. This revolutionary product combines all the benefits of dry-cell and rechargeable batteries in a single device. Sanyo's "Think GAIA" vision promotes the development of a clean, beautiful environment for future generations, and the *Eneloop* is the first in a series of products designed to realize these principles. With the *Eneloop*, batteries will no longer be a simple throwaway item, but a lasting, functional device.

GOVERNMENT

Toward a Tourist Friendly Japan

CABINET PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

The "Meeting on Community-Building for Tourism from Foreigners' Viewpoints" was held at the Prime Minister's Official Residence on February 9. Designed to allow foreign participants who contribute to promoting tourism and community-building in various regions of Japan to offer opinions and advice that may be used to help frame policy, ten people participated from six countries, including the United States, China and the Republic of Korea. In his opening address, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who initiated the gathering, stated, "The Japanese are people who love to go abroad. In comparison, the number of foreigners visiting Japan is still small. I would like people overseas to know a lot more about the charms of Japan. In this regard, I would like to hear the opinions of each of you who are living here in Japan and making positive efforts to make your lives here a success." Based upon their own experiences and viewpoints, the participants offered a range of helpful suggestions, including the use of pictograms on notice boards that provide tourist information, the opening of the Diet Buildings to tour groups and the establishment of buildings in Asian countries which promote tourism to Japan and Japanese cuisine.

A Positive Global Influence

According to a University of Maryland and BBC joint survey, Japan is the country mostly widely seen to have a positive influence on the world. The survey was carried out in 33 countries in North America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa between October and December last year. Questions were asked about the eight countries of Japan, the United States, China, Russia, France, Britain, India and Iran. In 31 countries the number of respondents stating that Japan has a "positive influence" on the world exceeded the number suggesting that it has a "negative influence." The overall average was 55% for a positive influence and 18% for negative influence. Indonesia (85%), the Philippines (79%) and the United States (66%) gave Japan particularly high positive ratings.

Karaoke Caravan

In February, the Japan Foundation sponsored a Karaoke Japanese Language Study Caravan to travel around Brazil. This was a promotion designed to demonstrate Japanese language learning through songs popular with young Japanese to young Brazilians between the ages of 13 and 25. The caravan was staffed by three members of the Foundation's Japan Culture Center in Sao Paulo who traveled around eight Brazilian cities. At each venue it attracted crowds of local young people interested in karaoke, *manga* or *anime*. To give the locals a taste of Japanese music, the first thing the group did was to play a DVD introducing 12 of the latest and most popular Japanese pop songs. The participants gained familiarity with the Japanese language through Japanese songs and took part in a Japanese song karaoke competition. Two winners from each of the cities were invited to take part in the National Japanese Karaoke Tournament for Young People held in San Paulo on March 26.

Stamps of Friendship

On March 1 stamps were issued using designs related to the theme of international exchange and friendship. The stamps feature designs taken from five winning entries of the Stamp Design Contest held in 2005. Three were chosen from the large number of designs submitted in the open section on the theme of *Nakayoshi* (friendly relations) and two from the junior section. There are also Japanese postmark designs on the theme of international exchange and friendship featuring Nakayoshi animals. Maybe you have received a letter from Japan with just such a stamp or postmark. Have a look and see.

NEWS

MEKONG Exhibition

JETRO

The MEKONG Exhibition was held in Tokyo from February 21 to 24. The Mekong region is home to many ethnic groups that have created their own diverse range of cultures along the banks of the Mekong River. Designed to promote the export of goods from the countries of this region to Japan, the exhibition was sponsored by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and the governments of five countries of the Mekong region—Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. A total of 31 private corporations also participated. The exhibition featured everything from interior decor items, textiles such as silk goods, foodstuffs and other products of the region to information on local investment environments. Held over four days, it also provided opportunities for discussions between companies from the Mekong region seeking to do business with Japan, and Japanese corporations wanting new products, purchase routes or looking for new business partners to run local sales outlets.

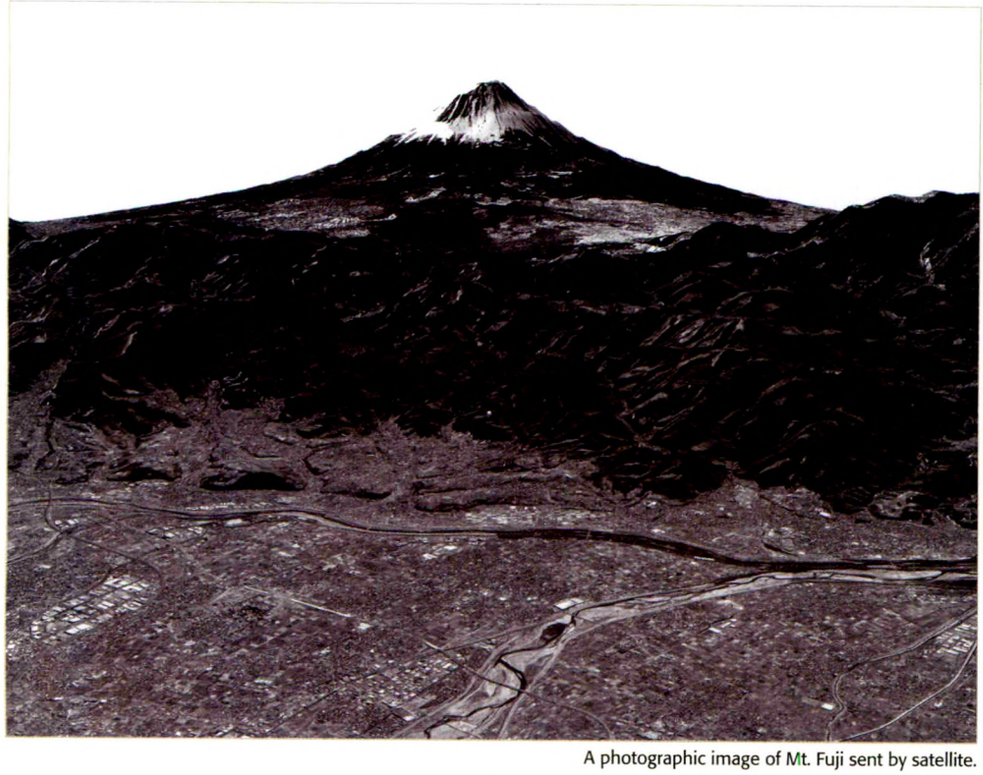
Kyoto Protocol Marks First Anniversary

February 16 marked the first anniversary of the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, which sets limits on emissions of greenhouse gases such as CO_2. While global greenhouse gas emissions are increasing, Japan has promised to reduce its emissions by 6% of 1990 levels and some Japanese corporations are investing in wind power generators overseas to earn carbon credits. Over the last year, the Ministry of the Environment has promoted Team Minus 6% to encourage the public and private sectors to work together to counter global warming. It has proposed more appropriate levels of office air-conditioning and heating, and business attire which reflects the seasonal climate through its COOL BIZ and WARM BIZ campaigns. It has also called for the proactive use of energy-efficient products. Figures reveal that public awareness of the COOL BIZ campaign was over 95%, and it is estimated that last year the campaign was successful in bringing about the reduction of the equivalent of the emissions generated by one million households in one month. As of March 2, as many as 185,000 people had registered their support for this project. Through events carried out in conjunction with private corporations the Ministry of the Environment is urging the people of Japan to become even more environmentally conscious.

One Village, One Product Campaign Logo

The Ministry of Trade, Economy and Industry has selected the logo for its One Village, One Product Campaign designed to find and develop distinctive products to introduce to the Japanese market from developing nations in regions such as Asia and Africa. The logo features a long, spiralling arm with a hand clutching the number 1. The spiralling arm signifies an arm reaching out to the world, while the number 1 indicates the single product manufactured by a single village. This logo has been designed specifically to represent the immense pride felt in putting forward the village's best product to the world. The gradually broadening spiral of the logo is indicative of the momentum created by the support and efforts of various people around the world. The Ministry of Trade, Economy and Industry intends to hold various campaigns and will use the logo as a celebration of the progress made by developing countries and the success of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations.

Three Satellites Successfully Launched



JAXA

A photographic image of Mt. Fuji sent by satellite.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) has successfully launched three separate satellites in the space of a single month.

The first successful launching took place on January 24 when Launch Vehicle No. 8 carried the Advanced Land Observing Satellite (ALOS) named "Daichi" into space. "Daichi" has a Panchromatic Remote-sensing Instrument for Stereo Mapping (PRISM) and a Phased Array Type L-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (PALSAR) on board and has already sent back images of the area around Mt. Fuji. It is hoped that in future the data it provides will be of use for cartographic purposes, regional observation and determining the extent of disasters.

On February 18, JAXA launched the Multi-functional Transport Satellite 2 (MTSAT). The MTSAT has the dual roles of weather observation and air traffic control and has been named Himawari along the lines of previous weather observation satellites. Prime Minister Koizumi commented, "I am pleased to learn that the MTSAT was successfully placed in orbit. I am also delighted to see that Japan's space development efforts are making steady progress."

To complete the trio of successful rocket launchings, February 22 saw the triumphant lift off of the ASTRO-F Scientific Satellite—Japan's first Infrared Astronomy Satellite (IRAS)—aboard the M-V Launch Vehicle No. 8. The ASTRO-F has been given the nickname "Akari," meaning "light." The only other successful launchings of an IRAS to date have been those of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States, and the European Space Agency (ESA). Observations are scheduled to commence approximately two months after the launch. It is hoped that the infrared rays aboard the ASTRO-F will allow the satellite to pursue the mystery of the birth and passing of stars and galaxies, and help to further our understanding of the universe.

KOIZUMI CABINET *e-mail magazine*

The weekly Koizumi Cabinet E-mail Magazine is available free of charge in English to subscribers. Each issue contains a message from Prime Minister Koizumi and other information about the government.

FOR SUBSCRIPTION INFO ➤

http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/m-magazine/index.html

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS:

➤ *February 2*

Prime Minister Koizumi commented on the recent heated debates taking place at Diet sessions on the supplementary budget for measures against asbestos, potential human pandemic influenza, and falsification of earthquake-resistance data. He asserted his intention to gain Diet approval on the budget and see to its swift implementation.

➤ *February 9*

Koizumi began by expressing his joy at the announcement that Her Imperial Highness Princess Akishino (Princess Kiko) was showing signs of pregnancy, and congratulated the Imperial Family on this heartwarming and wonderful news. He also noted that he had been able to attain approval for the implementation of the supplementary budget.

➤ *February 16*

In a bid to raise the number of inbound tourists to Japan, Koizumi last week invited several overseas residents to find out what aspects of Japan appeal to them. Koizumi received many helpful suggestions and learned about many of the attractions and charms of Japan that go unnoticed by the Japanese people.

➤ *February 23*

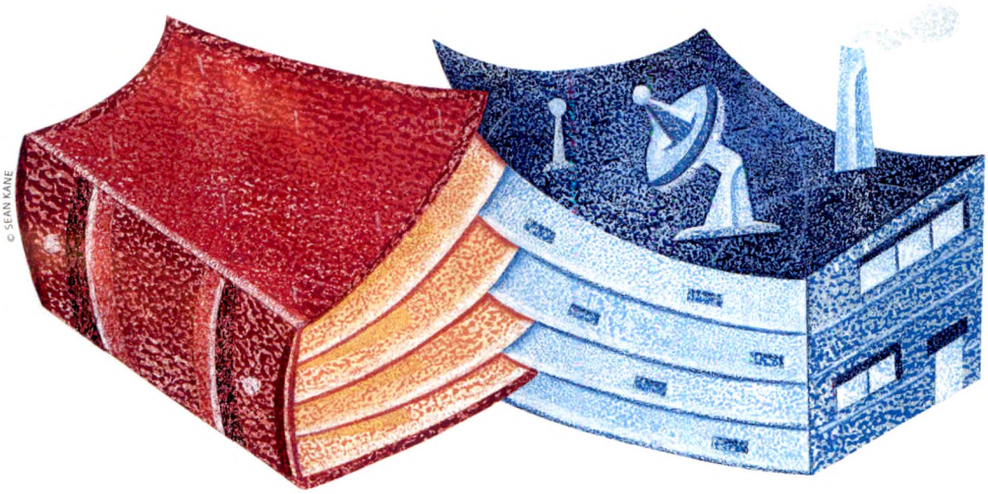
Koizumi further expanded on last week's discussion and called for Japanese people to be more open to the idea of accepting overseas tourists and inward foreign direct investment (FDI). He also spoke on the recent massive landslide in the Philippines and noted that a Japan Disaster Relief Team is mobilized and ready to depart if requested.

Reshaping Academia

Japan's national universities are transforming themselves into enterprising academic institutions with cutting-edge ideas and technologies.

Spurred on by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's reform initiative, Japan's national universities are shedding their traditional elitist image and becoming dynamic academic institutions with progressive ideas and leading-edge technologies. A major step in this direction was taken in April 2004, when Japan passed the National University Corporation Law. This regulation extended independence to Japan's 89 national universities and ended more than a century of state funding and bureaucratic control. Today, under the guidelines of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan's national universities are treated as administrative corporations with an independent management system. Reflecting the strong reform initiative, universities employ private sector management techniques that incorporate a keen sense of competition.

To meet the new challenges, national universities are forming working alliances with local industries and have begun setting up intellectual property offices on campus that are supported by state subsidies. Ryuji Koyama, Director of the Office for Higher Education Policy at MEXT, says structural reform is aimed at turning Japan into a nation based on creative science and technology. "Gone are the days when students believed that graduating from a national university was the passport to a good job. Today's graduates must be independent thinkers able to contribute to society with new ideas," says Koyama.



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Koyama goes on to explain that university reforms must ensure that Japan will not experience another economic "lost decade," which, according to experts, occurred due to Japan having lost its global competitiveness. Japan had grown into a homogeneous, complacent society that was unable to respond to the emergence of newly industrializing Asian nations that were producing goods cheaply. "We realized that to nurture a competitive economy, we had to introduce an atmosphere that breeds innovation, in the same way that universities in the United States embody an entrepreneurial spirit," points out Koyama.

Not to be outdone, several Japanese universities have established new joint research projects between industry and academia. According to ministry statistics, joint research projects in national universities totaled 9,378 in 2004 compared to a miniscule 160 in 1984. Cases of industry-sponsored research also increased sixfold to 7,827 projects during the same period. Data on patent activities in universities is also impressive with the number of licensed patents reaching 477 in 2004, much higher than the 185 reported in 2003. Collaborations between universities and regional communities have also been launched under a system called "Knowledge Clusters." The Knowledge Cluster is a technological innovation system formed through local initiatives with the university at its center. The project forms human networks and joint research organizations to develop unique technologies that benefit the local and national economy. State funding of around US$4.5 million is extended to each cluster initiative, and various projects centering on IT, engineering and life sciences are already underway.

Japan is also seeing the first fruits of these novel liaisons in the form of new products entering the market. For example, in collaboration with Sharp Corporation, Osaka Prefecture University has produced a water oven that operates using a minimum of electricity, while the University of Tokyo is now working with 476 companies to develop a ubiquitous microchip compatible with a wide variety of electrical products.

Despite these landmark achievements, Koyama acknowledges the road ahead is still long. A major hurdle toward success is convincing Japanese companies of the need to invest more in local universities as well as to increase the internationalization of Japanese campuses that still lag way behind the United States and even other countries such as Singapore and Australia.

But steps are being taken to remedy the situation and Koyama stresses that every effort is being made to push ahead as quickly as possible.

Text by **SUVENDRINI KAKUCHI**, a freelance journalist from Sri Lanka based in Tokyo

TAKESHI HAMASHITA

In ancient times there was no ownership of the seas, and the oceans were a common domain over which people, products, finance and information could freely come and go. Focusing on Asia from the perspective of this maritime logic, leading Asian historian, Takeshi Hamashita, discusses the possibilities provided by Asia's seas.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOSHIYUKI SASHO

When considering economic history from an Asian, instead of a western historical perspective, you advocate a view that suggests a completely different historical reality. Why did you start to think in this way?

It could be said that Hong Kong was the entry point for my study of Asian economic history and the development of my views. I visited Hong Kong for the first time in 1975 to participate in a historical project at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. As an assistant researcher at the University of Hong Kong's Center of Asian Studies, I studied in the bank's archives. Since its establishment in Hong Kong and Shanghai in 1865, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank has functioned as the central bank for Hong Kong, and has had a great influence upon China as a foreign bank.

Each day I traveled to the archive rooms of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, and spent most of the day absorbed in reading the historical materials of the bank. This was an extremely valuable experience. I researched an enormous amount of material dealing with the flow of remittances from overseas Chinese. Upon visiting coastal regions of South China and Southeast Asia, I began to realize that these regions were strongly connected through the role of the immigrant overseas Chinese, their remittances and the trading links between them. The financial market covering Southeast Asia and South China stretches widely, rather like a mesh, and money itself goes underground, changes, reforms, just like a living being. It can travel by way of a variety of destinations, expanding its profitability, before becoming a remittance in places such as Fukien or Guangdong.

I thought that these remittance networks could be a vital clue in discovering the historical continuity of the Asian economy. According to the viewpoint usually taken by western history, the modern history of Asia began after the pre-modern Asian order had disappeared. However, this view of history is somewhat inaccurate. What we need is a viewpoint that takes into account the continuity that runs across the divide between the pre-modern and modern eras, and without which we cannot grasp the essence of the complexity that makes up the Asian economy.

I imagine that these remittance networks do not come to the surface easily. How did you go about the search for them?

I have been visiting towns in Southeast Asia which have large overseas Chinese populations and building personal connections over many years, and this has helped in the search for the flows of remittances from overseas Chinese. At first, these overseas Chinese were largely distrustful, but after visiting for many years they gradually began opening up to me, and started to show me items such as their account books.

These personal networks have furthered my research, as have visits to various branches of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. When studying the network of branches I came across a common thread. It became clear that the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, and colonial banks which operated financial businesses in the former colonies and had head offices in Asia or in Britain, certainly had branches in the residential areas and trading areas of overseas Chinese, or overseas Indian merchants, who had historically established themselves in Southeast Asia.

These banks operated as powerful financiers over a wide area, and participated in the transactions of overseas Chinese and Indian communities, whether that involved trade, finance or indeed remittances. If we look at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank we can see the spreading of the financial channel by situating the branches where the overseas Chinese and Indian merchants operated, and then connecting these areas with one another in a financial network stretching from Hong Kong into China, and through

TAKESHI HAMASHITA studied modern East Asian history, with a particular focus on the historical role of the Sinocentric tributary trade system, and its expansion to East and Southeast Asia. His theories on the connection between the East Asian economy and the maritime influence of Asia have been well received by the global academic community. He is currently a professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University.

Southeast Asia to India. Of course, Japan was linked to this system, and branches were set up in Yokohama and Kobe.

When we view Asian economic history in this way, it shows that the spread of the activity of the banks was achieved by aligning their systems with the trade and remittance networks that had been historically established by overseas Chinese and Indians, and in which large amounts of capital were poured into businesses.

Japanese people have usually been taught in world history lessons that western countries "opened up" a closed and backward Asian market. If we take into account your perspective, then the meaning of the so-called "western impact" that we learned about takes on a different meaning.

Yes, indeed. Now in the 21st century, we see an era of Asian renaissance, and we should correct the view put forward by outmoded interpretations of world history. One factor here is the idea that the impact incurred by Asia through the growing presence of the European powers and the United States is somewhat erroneous. This is because the western powers were unable to extend their influence deep into Asian countries. What we can now see is that because there was a strong network of overseas Chinese and Indian merchants stretched widely around Asia, the western powers were able to use these forms of organization to expand their influence.

The "Modern West" did not appear in world history by bringing a new economic order to Asia. They used pre-existing networks of Asian trade, immigration and remittances, which had been historically accumulated, in order to expand their power in such areas as commerce, transport and finance. Another aspect of this is that the west, when coming into contact with these unexpected powers that Asia possessed, became involved in two-way flows of influence. This means that not only was there a western impact on Asia, but that there was a reciprocal impact on the west emanating from Asia.

How did the Asian intra-regional trade networks form and develop?

There are certain factors to remember when considering the intra-regional trade system that stretched around the Asian region. One is to look hard at Asia again in terms of long-term structural change, and the other is to look at Asia from the perspective of the seas around Asia. If we look historically, there are several maritime spheres from Northeast Asia to East Asia, and from Southeast Asia to the Oceania region, and these exerted great influence on the surrounding countries, regions and trading centers. This is an important characteristic of Asia and its maritime relationship.

These maritime links run from the Sea of Okhotsk, through the Sea of Japan to the Yellow Sea. This connects to the East China Sea and the South China Sea and on as far as the Tasman Sea. Also, from the South China Sea there are links to the Andaman Sea and the Indian Ocean. This all forms the most complex maritime system surrounding a continent anywhere in the world. These maritime areas are surrounded by either a continent, or peninsulas, or islands, and are distinguished from each other by their own distinctive geographical features. The regions situated around each maritime area are close enough to influence their mutual relations. At the same time, the distance between them was great enough to ensure that the originality of each area was also maintained. There is a need to put the history of Asia's maritime areas into perspective when thinking about the regional history of Asia.

The Sinocentric tributary trade system was in operation from the time of the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–907) through to the age of the Qing (AD 1644–1911) period, and this system played a vital role in linking the maritime regions of Asia. However, rather than being strictly controlled by a centralized doctrine from China, it was a system based on benevolent Chinese rule and a hierarchical order which allowed Korea, Japan and Vietnam to operate to their own advantage.

I thought that the tributary trading system was very feudalistic. Is that not so?

To illustrate the point, I think we can say that the Chinese world order was like an umbrella. This system did not aim at supremacy based on a uniform way doing things. In fact, the system was multilateral, multifaceted and multicultural, and formed a network which took into account the complexities that this vast region contained.

For example, even though Mongolia and Tibet were included under the Chinese umbrella, they had not been influenced by the Confucian moral philosophy which underpinned the Chinese world, and their religious traditions remained unchanged. It is my belief that the tributary system was formed by allowing for differ-

ence and heterogeneity, and this meant that the plural satellite tributary relationships could exist around China. Naturally, within this umbrella, relationships could result in localized conflicts. Yet, the nature of relationships could change and the relatively flexible tributary system maintained itself despite apparent contradictions. It could be said that the economic system utilized the suzerainty of China and was supported by trade relationships rather than a centralized governing system.

The tributary countries regularly dispatched envoys to Beijing, and the Chinese Emperor sent envoys to tributary countries on the occasion of a change of ruler, and this symbolized the subordinate status of local rulers within the Chinese world. However, it appears that the economic relationships based on trade were far more seriously considered than the political connections. When envoys were paying tribute in Beijing, they were allowed to accompany specially permitted merchants who would conduct commercial dealings. At the same time, on the borders and at ports merchant groups of much larger size were involved in trading activities.

Not only did the Chinese merchant groups of East and Southeast Asia participate in this tributary trading system, there were also Indian, Islamic and European merchants involved in the linkages that were established across the maritime regions of Asia. The seas around Asia were, therefore, not only tributary spheres, but also trading spheres.

What types of changes were observed when these historically developed trading spheres came into contact with the western powers?

The Europeans attempted to colonize by using the networks formed by the tributary trade in order to establish their power. As this process formed, not only the westerners, but also the Asian merchants made profits. It is a mistake to see the system as one of unilateral exploitation by the western countries. I think that the Asian merchants including the Chinese and Indians were quite tough people who were able to quickly adapt to any given situation.

By the end of the 19th century, the British had established nodal points in Hong Kong and Singapore and had largely restructured the existing Asian trading sphere. At this time the cultivation of rubber and the mining of tin had begun on the Malay Peninsula, and this involved the widespread use of Chinese and Indian labor. Hong Kong and Singapore acted as collection and distribution points for immigrants. Capital from the west entered both cities to facilitate the transit functions of trade, as well as the need for financial settlements. Both cities were trading centers originally formed by overseas Chinese, and both became British colonies.

In terms of relations between Asia and the west, these two coastal cities had an intermediary function of "connection" and "change" as they became bases for foreign firms and banks involved in trade, finance and investment. This gave them a huge role in the formation of a vast trading sphere that extended from South China to India. I think that the Asian trading area, which formed over a 500-year period, is very adaptable and continues today in a variety of ways that are not immediately obvious.

Currently, the East Asian region has started to move toward the construction of an "East Asian Community." It seems that there is a need to think about those trading systems now.

The East Asian Community conceives of constructing the nation state as the basic unit. I am not against this per se. However, I feel that the facts do not support this conceptual method for an East Asian Community. The historical network of coastal towns and cities connecting the eastern side of the Eurasian continent should not be ignored.

The Chinese tributary system which reigned over the maritime world of Asia, may be difficult to understand from a western point of view. However, that system helped to create the dynamism of today's Asia. I think that the pursuance of discussions aimed at deepening cooperation in East Asia should take into full consideration the region's historical experience.

This is especially so when we realize that the maritime trade networks promoted the expansion of private trade. Asian thinking that adopts the way of the European model may drive out those versatile systems that are thought to be pre-modern. However, in order for East Asia to evolve into an economic system that is open and autonomous as an economic center of the world, we must consider various issues by the logic of the regional and historical characteristics of East Asia, instead of making judgments based upon the economic models of other regions.

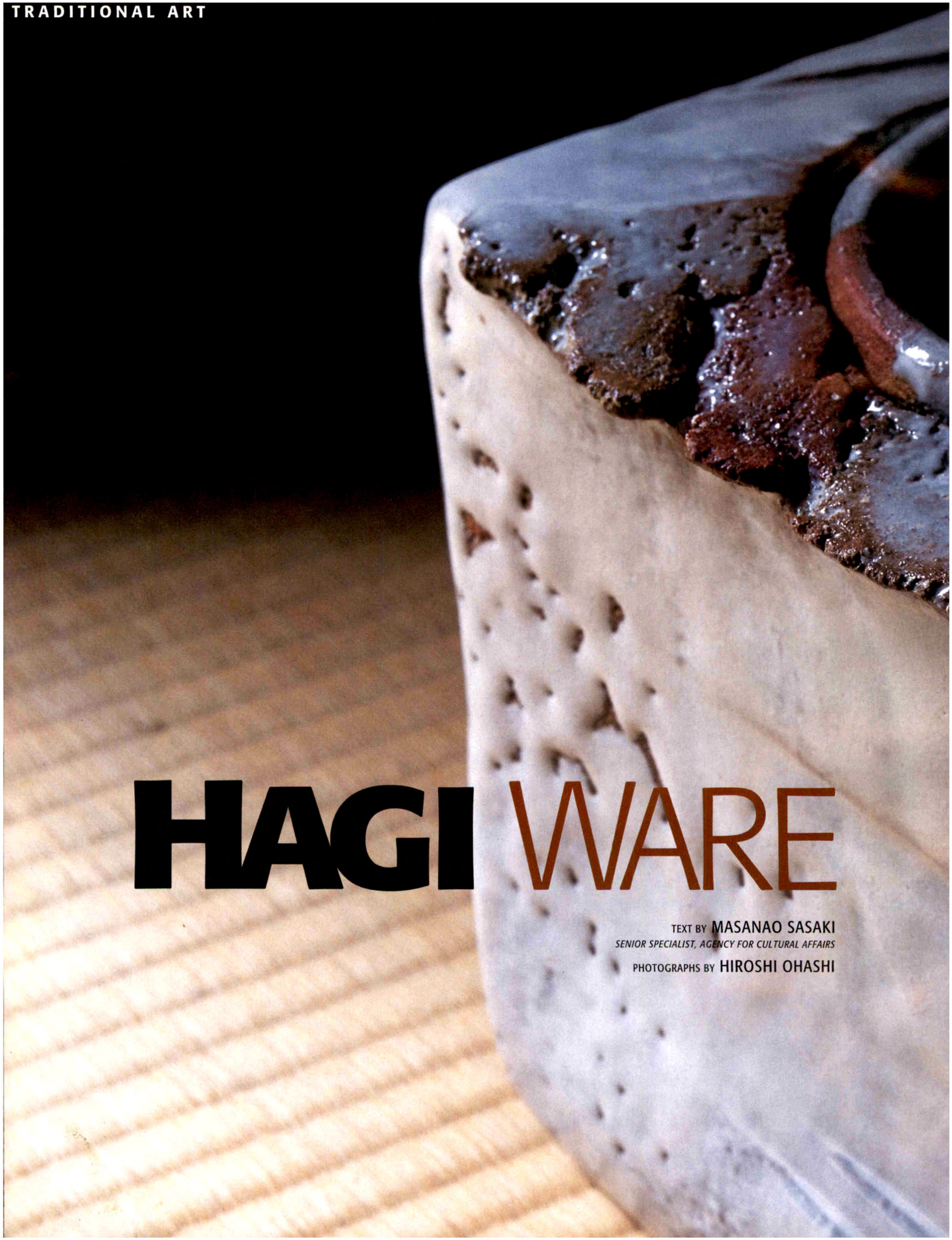
How should Japan take part in this East Asia economic sphere?

I don't think that Japan can ever construct a system similar to that of the previous Sinocentric regional system and certainly should not attempt to do so. Japan has not been good at accepting complexity, yet what Japan has been good at is taking heterogeneity or difference and changing it to fit a Japanese way of homogeneity. In other words, "Japanization."

Should Japan draw closer to the historical Chinese world order or keep its distance? When one turns one's thoughts to such issues, it is helpful to consider the role of Okinawa. The Ryukyu Kingdom, which was located in present day Okinawa Prefecture, functioned as a node of the transit trade between Southeast Asia, China and Japan in the tributary trading system. The existence of transit bases that connect the vast maritime regions of Asia is extremely important from the perspective of Asian history. Formerly, Malacca and Guangzhou were examples, now Singapore and Hong Kong perform these transit functions. Since 1997, China has been making the transformation from a somewhat inward-looking continental country to one that fully utilizes the maritime sphere with Hong Kong as an important base.

Given this, Japan should pay more attention to the role of Okinawa as a nodal point of connection. Okinawa's potential has hardly been utilized up to now. I feel that we should think about reevaluating the networking potential of Okinawa, which is open to the seas of Asia, and also consider what the relationship between Japan and Asia should be like in future.

— INTERVIEW BY HISASHI KONDO



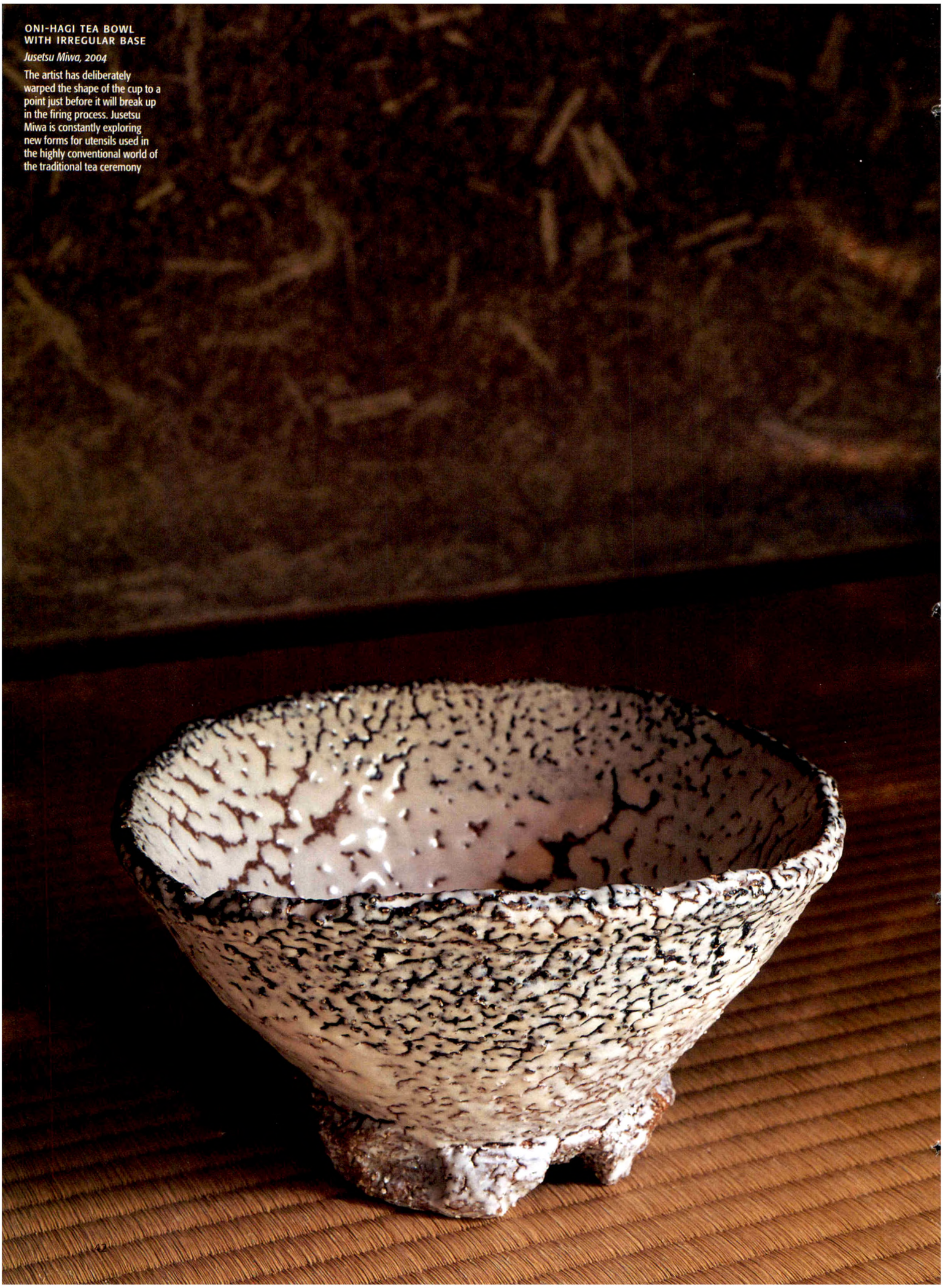
HAGI WARE

TEXT BY MASANAO SASAKI
SENIOR SPECIALIST, AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROSHI OHASHI

WHITE HAGI FOUR-SIDED WATER JAR

Jusetsu Miwa, 2003

After the basic kaolin clay shape is formed, the inner part of the jar is carefully hollowed out. Parts of the finished surface have been deliberately gouged out with a rusty old sword to remind the viewer of the craggy earthen origins of this work.



ONI-HAGI TEA BOWL WITH IRREGULAR BASE

Jusetsu Miwa, 2004

The artist has deliberately warped the shape of the cup to a point just before it will break up in the firing process. Jusetsu Miwa is constantly exploring new forms for utensils used in the highly conventional world of the traditional tea ceremony

HAGI WARE

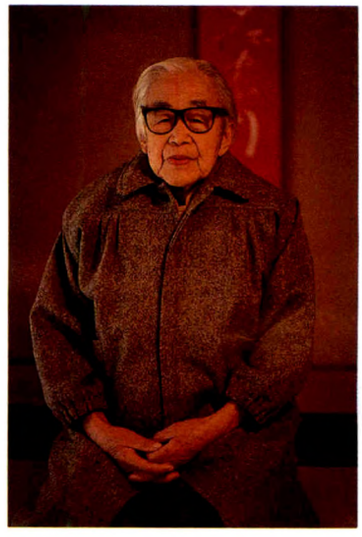
Raku first, Hagi second, Karatsu third!" Over the years many layers of tradition have developed in the world of the Japanese tea ceremony. One of these is the ranking of several schools of pottery as the most highly prized ceramics for use in "the way of tea." Second only to the most highly valued Raku ware made in Kyoto is Hagi ware, this is closely followed by Karatsu ware of Saga Prefecture. Although it is unclear exactly when this adage developed, it does indicate how Hagi tea bowls have been appreciated for many generations.

The tradition of Hagi pottery began with the work of two Korean brothers, Li Shakko (or Yi Chak-kwang) and his younger brother, who took on the Japanese name of Saka Koraizaemon. The two were brought to Japan following two Japanese incursions into the Korean peninsula in 1592 and 1597. Under the sponsorship of the local daimyo, Terumoto Mori, they established a kiln in Matsumoto, in what is now Hagi City in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Their techniques were adopted by other potters in Fukawa, in today's Nagato City, and elsewhere in Yamaguchi Prefecture. The forms and techniques of Hagi ware give a rare insight into the ceramic techniques that flowered in Korea the early-to-middle period of the Yi dynasty (1392–1910).

Hagi tea bowls have an elegant glaze and feel that are ideally suited to the wabi, or simplicity, of tea ceremony. These features are due in part to the use of a clay body formed mainly of white, kaolin clay from the Daido district of Hofu City, Yamaguchi Prefecture. With use over time, the pale glaze of Hagi pieces takes on different hues, giving Hagi ware a particular depth and dynamism. The shared characteristics that distinguish the Hagi pottery tradition can be found in its raw materials, and production methods and techniques. Interestingly, another adage is associated with Hagi ware, *Hagi no nanabake*, or "the seven shades of Hagi." This adage describes how the tone of a Hagi piece changes as moisture is gradually absorbed into the porous clay. The color of an initially pale piece of Hagi ware can evolve over time to a fawn or a bluish-white color. Intrigued by this serendipitous change, which is much more marked in Hagi than in other types of pottery, tea masters celebrated the phenomenon with its own special phrase.

Today, a number of established workshops carry on the Hagi pottery tradition. Three kilns are located in the Matsumoto area—the Saka, Miwa and Yoshika kilns. The Sakakura, Sakata, Tawara and other kilns are located in nearby Fukawa, and Yamaguchi City is home to the Yamato kiln and others. Hagi ware has been prized as tea ware since early modern times, and occupies an important place within Japanese ceramic tradition. At the same time, Hagi ware retains a unique local flavor. In 1970, Hagi ware was designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property, and Kyuwa Miwa (1895–1981) was designated the inaugural Official Holder of this Property. The Hagi ware of today is rich in creative variety, encompassing traditional pieces for use in the tea ceremony as well as avant-garde decorative items.

The current Holder of the Important Intangible Cultural Property of Hagi ware is Jusetsu Miwa, the younger brother of Kyuwa Miwa. Born in 1910, Jusetsu is 96 years old. In 1967, when his older brother retired, Jusetsu took over the Miwa kiln and assumed the inherited name of Kyusetsu XI. He passed the Kyusetsu title on to his own eldest son, Ryosaku, in 2003, and returned to his former name of Jusetsu. However, Jusetsu Miwa is anything but retired. His creative energy is as strong as ever, and the elder statesman of Hagi pottery retains a busy and productive schedule. The Miwa family has preserved the traditions of Hagi pottery throughout the generations, ever since it began providing the Mori feudal lords with high quality ceramics in the early



Despite being 96 years of age, Jusetsu Miwa continues to create unconventional and innovative works of art. And his creative appetite certainly shows no signs of decline.

HAGI WARE

HAGI FRESH WATER JAR

Kyuwa Miwa

Collection of the Tokyo National Museum, 1967

Kyuwa Miwa, elder brother of Jusetsu, was a master who held the inherited title of Kyusetsu X, and opened up new vistas in the Hagi pottery tradition. One example is his improvement of the traditional white glaze, which was then named after him, as Kyusetsu white.

The form of this piece is warm and flowing. The touch with which the white glaze was applied, leaving just the right amount of underlying clay exposed, is masterful indeed. Note the paddle marks on the body of the jar. The handle on the lid also incorporates a refreshing freedom of shape.

HAGI TEA CEREMONY UTENSIL WITH IRREGULAR BASE

Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, early-Edo Period

In the early days of Hagi ceramic ware, many tea bowls were created complete with straw ash glaze, while the irregular shape of the base has always been an instantly recognizable feature of Hagi ware. This piece is a particularly fine representation of early Hagi ware which has been handed down over the generations. It is believed that the irregular base has been a distinctive feature of Hagi ware since its earliest days and was originally incorporated to harmonize with the overall design. Throughout its long history, the bases used in Hagi ware have undergone constant changes depending on the individual tastes of the artist.

Edo period (1603–1867). Jusetsu's older brother, Kyuwa (Kyusetsu X), fully mastered the traditional techniques of Hagi ware. Kyuwa also carefully researched the Korean pottery origins of the Hagi tradition. He incorporated a Japanese sensibility into the historical Korean forms, eventually arriving at a highly personalized style—rich with harmonious refinement. Perhaps most notably, Kyuwa developed a unique approach to using the white glaze that can be considered a distinguishing characteristic of Hagi ware. It was such a marked advance that the improved white glaze itself was named "Kyusetsu white." Kyuwa Miwa dedicated his career and his life to establishing the Hagi tradition in the modern age.

Jusetsu Miwa followed family tradition and his older brother's footsteps when, at the age of 17, he began his own apprenticeship in the family art of Hagi pottery. His own independent style of pottery crafting started rather later, around 1955—when he was already 45 years old. Jusetsu's work attracted as much attention at Japanese traditional arts exhibitions as the work of his older brother. Jusetsu's style, however, was very distinctive. Although he produced pieces according to traditional Hagi techniques and used shapes similar to other Japanese bowls produced at the Miwa kiln, Jusetsu's modeling sensibility was highly individual. He brought a breath of fresh air into the convention-bound world of tea ware. To begin with, his clay body was unconventional. Jusetsu preferred to use a gritty type of clay often known as Oni-Hagi, "the devil of Hagi," which he formed by adding coarse sand to Daido kaolin clay. He used both the traditional almond-colored glaze containing feldspar and the ash-based pure white glaze successfully developed by his brother, Kyusetsu X. Jusetsu's use of this white glaze was particularly effective in his boldly innovative, ruggedly formed tea bowls, fresh water jars and flower vases. Critics have long declared that the extraordinary forms created by Jusetsu go beyond the confines of conventional tea ware or the category of Hagi pottery.

When Jusetsu needs a break from his pottery, he visits the nearby seashore. There, he enjoys watching the rough waters of the Japan Sea. "I once thought it was impossible to capture the essence of the raging waves of the Japan Sea in a piece of pottery. But in the past few years I feel that I have finally found a way to express that majesty and power in my work," says Jusetsu.

The sturdy notched circular base seems as if anchored to the table on which it stands. The powerful form of the bowl as it extends upward from this solid base is without flaw. Meanwhile, the contrast between the thickly coated white glaze and the dark fired clay below speaks of a strength that swells beneath the surface. Perhaps Jusetsu's Japan Sea is found in this type of gritty Oni-Hagi-based tea bowl.

"The Hagi style was developed specifically to supply fine pottery for use in the tea ceremony. But it isn't enough that a piece merely fulfill its assigned function. When held and touched, it should inspire the holder to want to do more than just go through the motions of the tea ceremony. My pieces should energize the user. I think that's the most crucial attitude for the potter to have during the creative process."

With each year since passing the age of 90, the vitality of form in Jusetsu Miwa's work has only increased. A large-scale exhibition of the work of this towering giant of Japanese ceramics is planned for this year. One can be certain that it will be no mere retrospective of bygone days.

This month's feature on Hagi ceramic ware concludes our three-year series of articles featuring Japan's Living National Treasures. We very much hope you have enjoyed the series as much as we have enjoyed researching and writing it.

ONI-HAGI TEA BOWL WITH IRREGULAR BASE

Jusetsu Miwa, 2004

This glazed work -- shown three-dimensionally to indicate the intentional roughness and rugged boorishness that the artist has attempted to incorporate -- never fails to elicit startled reactions from tea ceremony participants and casual viewers. Rather than a tea bowl, it could easily be mistaken for a piece of ashen-covered volcanic rock.

ENVIRONMENT

ASPECTS OF MT. FUJI

Lessons from Mt. Fuji

TEXT AND PHOTO BY **YUKIO OHYAMA**

One year has passed since I commenced this series on Mt. Fuji, but the more I write the more there seems to be left unsaid. To conclude, I would like to relate something I have learned from Mt. Fuji.

In my younger days, I was so keen to get up close to the mountain that I would recklessly head off in its direction even in the bowels of winter. I realize now how foolhardy that was, as though I was putting myself through some austere religious discipline. There was also a time when if I sensed that I was losing sight of myself I would head for Mt. Fuji. It served as a kind of barometer to check if my soul was on an even keel.

When I stand at the summit of Mt. Fuji I appreciate how minute I am as one human being in the context of the vastness of nature around me. Even the Earth is a mere speck of dust in the endless realms of space. If we think about it, we come to realize that all the things that make up this world – the plants, the trees, the stones – are all partners, existing equally at the same moment in time. Before long we see that one human's existence does not even qualify as a speck of dust.

I went to Mt. Fuji to take photographs, but came away with far more. I was able to restore a freedom to my soul that nothing can take from me. Eternally grateful for the precious lessons Mt. Fuji has taught me, I will now bring this series to an end.

YUKIO OHYAMA has spent more than 30 years photographing Mt. Fuji, and through his publications has given an intimate look at the heart of the mountain. Having spent many long hours quietly face to face with Mt. Fuji, he has many tales to tell.

EDITOR'S NOTE

SPD Awards Announcement

We are delighted to inform our readers that *Asia-Pacific Perspectives: Japan+ (APP: Japan+)* has received three separate Design Merit Awards in the 41st Annual Design Competition of the Society of Publication Designers (SPD). The awards were received in the categories of Photo Story, and Design: Spread/Single Page. In the category of Photo Story, *APP: Japan+* entered the Special Feature "Proud Heritage" (pp.6–19) of the August 2005 edition. Two separate awards were also received in the category of Design: Spread/Single Page. One award was received for the design of pp.8–9 "Ancient Pathways to the Gods" from the same Special Feature, which features a photograph of the path to the entrance of Kumano Nachi-taisha Shrine, and a photograph of a stone monument that adorns the ancient pilgrim's pathway in the Kii mountain range. Pages 40 and 41 of the same August 2005 edition – the introductory pages of the Traditional Art feature on *Wajima Lacquer Ware* – also received an award in the category of Design: Spread/Single Page. These pages feature a double-page photograph of a Wajima bowl in the process of creation.

The designs were the work of *APP: Japan+* Art Director Kevin Foley and the featured photographs were taken by regular *APP: Japan+* photographers Tadashi Okochi, Hiroshi Shimabukuro, Shin'ichi Sato and Hiroshi Ohashi.

This year's awards constitute the second consecutive year that *APP: Japan+* has been the recipient of Design Merit Awards from the SPD.

Other award winners included some of the world's best-known magazines such as *Life, National Geographic* and the *New York Times Magazine*. All award winning entries are to be exhibited at the Society's annual Awards Gala in New York City in May this year and will be published in the *41st Publication Design Annual*.

Readers are invited to send in their opinions on any topics raised in any issue of *APP: Japan+*, or indeed on any topic relevant to Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. Letters are welcome either by e-mail (**j-plus@jijigaho.or.jp**) or by post (***APP: Japan+*, Jiji Gaho Sha, Fonte Akasaka Building, Akasaka 7-10-17, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052, Japan.**)

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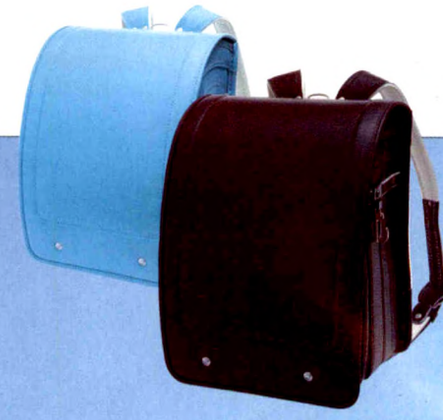
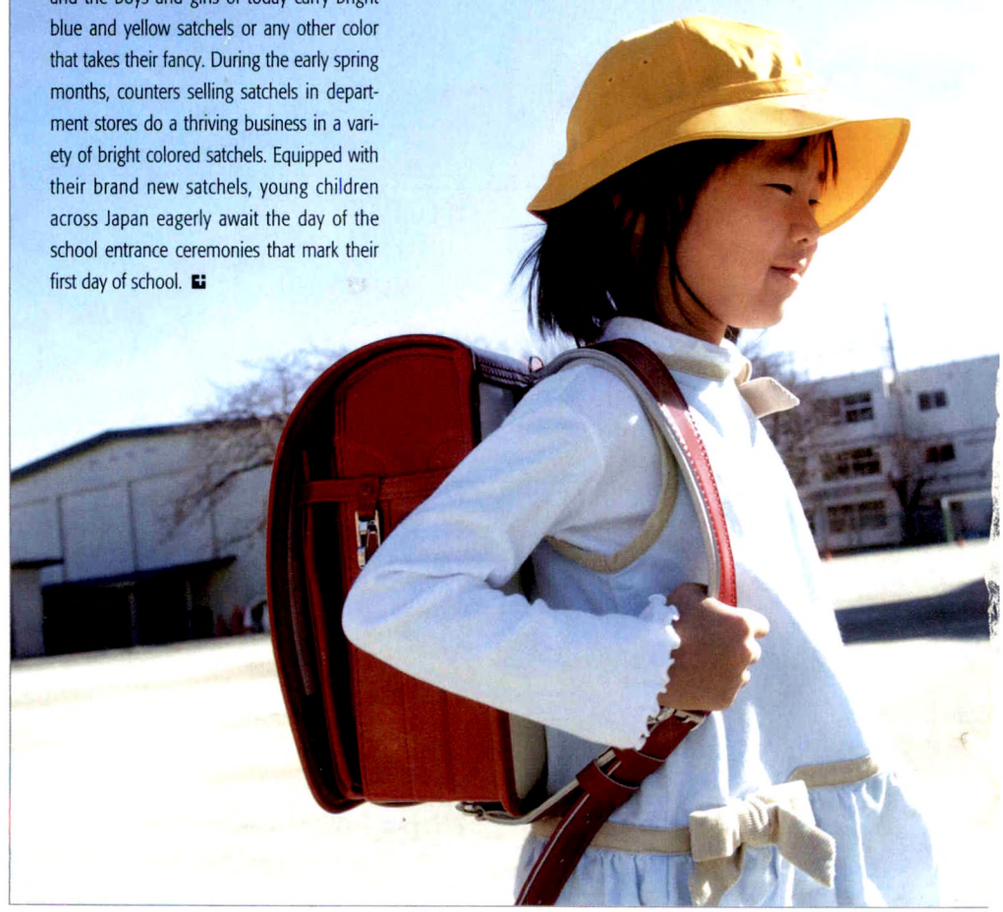
SELECTION



School Satchels

Each year, the month of April sees the beginning of a new season in Japan. Symbolic of this are the school satchels worn by new elementary schoolchildren attending school for the very first time. The majority of these satchels are made of natural or synthetic leather and contain the children's text and exercise books.

Today's satchels date back to the year 1885, and evolved from the knapsacks worn by schoolchildren in the late Edo (1603–1867) period. In Japan these satchels are known as "*Randoseru*"– a word derived from the original Dutch word for knapsack, "Raenzel." The satchels obtained their present sturdy form and became widely used by elementary schoolchildren in the mid-1950s. At first, boys would carry black satchels, while girls would carry red. However, in more recent years a range of colorful satchels have entered the market, and the boys and girls of today carry bright blue and yellow satchels or any other color that takes their fancy. During the early spring months, counters selling satchels in department stores do a thriving business in a variety of bright colored satchels. Equipped with their brand new satchels, young children across Japan eagerly await the day of the school entrance ceremonies that mark their first day of school.



TOKYO BIG SIGHT EVENT SCHEDULE APRIL 2006—JUNE 2006

3/31 (Fri) – 4/2 (Sun) *Public ¥1500*
The 33rd Tokyo Motorcycle Show 2006
Tokyo Motorcycle Show Operation Secretariat
Tel: 03-5847-7045 Fax: 03-5847-7046

4/1 (Sat) – 4/2 (Sun) *Public ¥500*
2006 FCI ASIAN INTERNATIONAL DOG SHOW/AKU CHAMPIONSHIP DOG SHOW
JAPAN KENNEL CLUB, INC.
Tel: 03-3251-1652 Fax: 03-3251-1659

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
Sea Japan 2006
Sea Japan Secretariat office
Tel: 03-5296-1020 Fax: 03-5296-1018

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
Sensor Expo Japan 2006
Fuji Sankei Business-i. Promotion Division
Tel: 03-3273-6184 Fax: 03-3241-4999

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1500*
International Measurement, Test and Control Technology Show 2006
JAPAN MEASURING INSTRUMENTS FEDERATION
Tel: 03-3268-2121 Fax: 03-3268-2167

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
The 1st International Homefashion Fair
IHF Office
Tel: 03-3847-9853 Fax: 03-3843-9850

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
33rd INTERNATIONAL PREMIUM INCENTIVE SHOW
Business Guide-sha Inc.
Tel: 03-3847-9155 Fax: 03-3847-9436

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
22nd FORMAL GIFT FAIR SPRING 2006
Business Guide-sha Inc.
Tel: 03-3847-9155 Fax: 03-3847-9436

4/5 (Wed) – 4/7 (Fri) *Trade Free*
MEDIA MARKET SHOW 2006
Business Guide-sha Inc.
Tel: 03-3847-9155 Fax: 03-3847-9436

4/6 (Thu) – 4/8 (Sat) *Public ¥1000*
THE 4th PAINT SHOW 2006
The Paint Show 2006 Executive Committee
Tel: 03-6821-5115 Fax: 03-3780-0885

4/12 (Wed) – 4/15 (Sat) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
The Japan International Welding Show 2006
Sanpo Publications, Inc.
Tel: 03-3258-6411 Fax: 03-3258-6430

4/19 (Wed) – 4/21 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
16th FINETECH JAPAN (FPD R&D AND MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY EXPO & CONFERENCE)
FINETECH JAPAN Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

4/19 (Wed) – 4/21 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
2nd International FPD Expo
Display 2006 Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8502 Fax: 03-3349-4900

4/24 (Mon) – 4/26 (Wed) *Trade ¥3000*
CPhI JAPAN 2006
CMP Japan Co., Ltd.
Tel: 03-5296-1020 Fax: 03-5296-1018

4/24 (Mon) – 4/26 (Wed) *Trade ¥3000*
ICSE JAPAN 2006
CMP Japan Co., Ltd.
Tel: 03-5296-1020 Fax: 03-5296-1018

4/28 (Fri) – 4/30 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥2000*
Tokyo Special Import-Car Show 2006
Tokyo Special Import-Car Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3360-1821 Fax: 03-3360-1829

4/28 (Fri) – 4/30 (Sun) *Trade/Public ¥2000*
GARAGE & HOUSING EXPO 2006
GARAGE & HOUSING EXPO Management Office
Tel: 03-3360-1821 Fax: 03-3360-1829

5/3 (Wed) *Public ¥1000*
AMUSING COLLECTION FLEA MARKET & COS-DAY/Comic Characters
TAKARAJIMA Collection Market Office
Tel: 03-3843-1290 Fax: 03-3843-2400

5/3 (Wed) – 5/4 (Thu) *Public ¥1000*
SUPER COMIC CITY 15
Akaboo
Tel: 03-3225-8520

5/5 (Fri) *Public ¥1500*
Dolls Party 15
VOLKS
Tel: 075-813-1171 Fax: 075-813-1133

5/5 (Fri) *Public ¥1000*
World Hobby Festival Ariake 14
WHF office
Tel: 044-755-8898 Fax: 044-755-7530

5/6 (Sat) – 5/8 (Mon) *Trade/Public ¥1200*
TOKYO ART COLLECTION
Office TOKYO ART COLLECTION
Tel: 03-5501-7011 Fax: 03-5501-7021

5/8 (Mon) – 5/10 (Wed) *Trade*
Beautyworld Japan
Beautyworld Japan Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3262-8456 Fax: 03-3262-8442

5/11 (Thu) – 5/13 (Sat) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
30th 2006 JAPAN HOBBY SHOW
JAPAN HOBBY ASSOCIATION
Tel: 03-3851-6628 Fax: 03-3864-8535

5/17 (Wed) – 5/19 (Fri) *Trade/Public Free*
BUSINESS SHOW TOKYO IT&C/Advanced Office Fair 2006
Business Show Group Nippon Omni-Management Association
Tel: 03-3403-8910 Fax: 03-3403-5716

5/17 (Wed) – 5/19 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
19th INTERPHEX JAPAN
INTERPHEX JAPAN Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8509 Fax: 03-3349-4922

5/17 (Wed) – 5/19 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
5th INTERNATIONAL BIO EXPO JAPAN
INTERNATIONAL BIO EXPO JAPAN Show Management
Tel: 03-3349-8509 Fax: 03-3349-4922

5/20 (Sat) – 5/21 (Sun) *Public ¥1000*
DESIGN-FESTA VOL.23
DESIGN-FESTA OFFICE
Tel: 03-3479-1433 Fax: 03-3479-1498

5/23 (Tue) – 5/26 (Fri) *Public ¥1000*
N-EXPO
Nippo Event
Tel: 03-3262-3562 Fax: 03-5214-6633

5/24 (Wed) – 5/26 (Fri) *Trade*
ANEX2006 (ASIA NONWOVENS EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE)
E.J. Krause & Associates, Inc. JAPAN
Tel: 03-5772-1321 Fax: 03-5772-1324

5/24 (Wed) – 5/26 (Fri) *Public Free*
ECO-GREEN TECH 2006
The Executive Committee of Eco-Green Tech
Tel: 03-3267-4886 Fax: 03-3267-4842

5/30 (Tue) – 6/1 (Thu) *Trade ¥3000*
ifia JAPAN 2006 (International Food Ingredients & Additives Exhibition and Conference)
E.J. Krause & Associates, Inc. JAPAN
Tel: 03-5772-1321 Fax: 03-5772-1324

5/31 (Wed) – 6/2 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
JPCA Show 2006 The 36th International Electronic Circuits Exhibition
Japan Electronics Packaging and Circuits Association
Tel: 03-5310-2020 Fax: 03-5310-2021

5/31 (Wed) – 6/2 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
PWB Technology Expo 2006
Japan Electronics Packaging and Circuits Association
Tel: 03-5310-2020 Fax: 03-5310-2021

5/31 (Wed) – 6/2 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
FPC Expo 2006
Japan Electronics Packaging and Circuits Association
Tel: 03-5310-2020 Fax: 03-5310-2021

5/31 (Wed) – 6/2 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
DES Expo 2006
Japan Electronics Packaging and Circuits Association
Tel: 03-5310-2020 Fax: 03-5310-2021

5/31 (Wed) – 6/2 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
MicroTEST 2006
Japan Electronics Packaging and Circuits Association
Tel: 03-5310-2020 Fax: 03-5310-2021

5/31 (Wed) – 6/2 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
2006 Microelectronics Show 20th Advanced Electronics Packaging Exhibition
Japan Electronics Packaging and Circuits Association
Tel: 03-5310-2020 Fax: 03-5310-2021

5/31 (Wed) – 6/2 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥5000*
LinuxWorld Expo/Tokyo 2006
LinuxWorld Management Office
Tel: 03-5800-4831 Fax: 03-5800-3973

6/6 (Tue) – 6/7 (Wed) *Trade Free*
LEISURE HOTEL FAIR 2006
LEISURE HOTEL FAIR office
Tel: 03-3563-0420 Fax: 03-3564-2560

6/6 (Tue) – 6/8 (Thu) *Trade/Public Free*
HEALTH & FITNESS JAPAN 2006
HEALTH & FITNESS JAPAN COMMITTEE
Tel: 045-316-5387 Fax: 045-290-1222

6/6 (Tue) – 6/9 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
2006 INTERNATIONAL FOOD MACHINERY & TECHNOLOGY EXHIBITION (FOOMA JAPAN)
Secretariat of FOOMA JAPAN
Tel: 03-3503-7661 Fax: 03-3503-7620

6/14 (Wed) – 6/16 (Fri) *Trade ¥1000*
INTERIOR LIFESTYLE
Mesago Messe Frankfurt Corp.
Tel: 03-3262-8453 Fax: 03-3262-8442

6/14 (Wed) – 6/16 (Fri) *Trade/Public ¥1000*
Architectural Reform & Renewal Exhibition
Architectural Reform & Renewal Exhibition Organizing Committee Secretariat
Tel: 03-3228-3401 Fax: 03-3228-3410

6/19 (Mon) – 6/20 (Tue) *Trade ¥2000*
The 5th Asia Beauty Expo
ICS Convention Design, Inc.
Tel: 03-3219-3561 Fax: 03-3292-1813

6/21 (Wed) – 6/23 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
Design Engineering & Manufacturing Solutions Expo/Conference
DMS Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8506 Fax: 03-3349-8500

6/25 (Sun) *Public*
COMIC CITY TOKYO 113
Akaboo
Tel: 03-3225-8520

6/28 (Wed) – 6/30 (Fri) *Trade ¥5000*
15th Software Development Expo & Conference in TOKYO
SODEC Show Management Office
Tel: 03-3349-8504 Fax: 03-3349-8500

The events schedule is based on information received from organizers. It is subject to change without notice. For more information, please contact the management office for each event.

Science Council of Japan

The Science Council of Japan (SCJ) was established under the Science Council of Japan Law in 1949 as a special agency under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister. The SCJ consists of 210 elected members who represent 790,000 scientists nationwide.

As of October 1, 2005, the organizational structure of the SCJ underwent reform with the existing seven divisions being scaled down to three. Other reforms include: the establishment of the Management Board that makes decisions on specific issues commissioned by the General Assembly, the appointment of an additional vice president responsible for international affairs, reinforcement of policy proposal functions, the creation of a network for the scientific community and the further strengthening international activities.

In addition, along with making proposals based on accurate scientific knowledge and the good sense of scientists to society, the SCJ remains committed to promote better understanding of science that contributes to the general improvement of people's lives.

2006 SCJ Joint International Conference Schedule

20th IUBMB International Congress of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and 11th FAOBMB Congress	June 18-23, 2006 Kyoto International Conference Hall
International Congress of CARS 2006 (Computer Assisted Radiology and Surgery 2006)	June 28-July 1, 2006 Osaka International Convention Center
2006 International Political Science Association (IPSA) World Congress in Fukuoka	July 9-13, 2006 Fukuoka International Congress Center
19th International Mineralogical Association (IMA)	July 23-28, 2006 International Conference Center Kobe
ICOB-5 & ISCNP-25 IUPAC International Conference on Biodiversity and Natural Products	July 23-28, 2006 Kyoto International Conference Hall
International Conference on Magnetism (ICM) 2006	August 20-25, 2006 Kyoto International Conference Hall
2006 International Congress for Psychotherapy in Japan and The Third International Conference of the Asian Federation for Psychotherapy	August 28-September 1, 2006 Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo
The 16th International Microscopy Congress (IMC16)	September 3-8, 2006 Sapporo Convention Center

http://www.simul-conf.com/mega/index.html

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